



DEVELOPING A PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BODY  
FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

PSB Project Board Meeting

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Paper 1 - Business Case

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## 1. Introduction

This paper has been produced in order to:

- Summarise the high-level case for the development and continuous improvement of centralised professional standards and good practice within fire and rescue services
- Identify the current position in terms of the availability and quality of standards and good practice in the sector
- Identify the key priorities for action as far as is possible at this time
- Agree a new integrated delivery model, working in partnership with other key stakeholders in the sector
- Establish a new independent Fire Standards Board to be responsible for the oversight of professional standards and good practice and describe its functions
- Identify how development work should be managed, resourced and delivered, through the NFCC's Fire Central Programme Office (CPO)
- Outline the initial steps and work plan for delivery
- Close down the Professional Standards Body project

## 2. Why are professional standards important to the fire and rescue service?

National professional standards are a key component of continuous improvement in any sector. They form a point of focus, against which performance can be measured and further improvement or new requirements be identified. In short, they identify “what good looks like”. They are a **key component of a performance management system**.

Clearly in a localised governance model, such as fire and rescue services, the need to have benchmarks to measure performance against is not new. All services are using a range of different professional standards. Many of these are identified in the attached [Appendix A](#), against broad areas of fire and rescue service duties and responsibilities. Being free to choose the standards from a range available, allows local fire and rescue services to select those that they feel best meet their needs and best address the specific risks in local IRMPs. It could be considered wasteful, though, to separately decide which standards are most appropriate in 45 organisations (in England) that deliver broadly the same service. There are also some areas where no standards are in place at all. It would be of great value to **focus all services on central professional standards to drive efficiency and consistency in this area**.

Having a well-developed suite of professional standards provides a consistent means for each fire and rescue service to measure their achievement against them. This also provides an opportunity for the public to have access to information that will tell them how well their fire and rescue service is performing. To this end, all professional standards need to be open, accessible and **presented in a way that a lay person can understand what is expected, and why, to be able to understand the performance of their service**.

As explained above, central national standards will allow fire and rescue services to share common aspirations and to work on improvement internally. Having such standards available also allows evidence to be gathered by bodies responsible for third party assurance, such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). **This will enable inspection to be focused upon independent expectations of the sector.** In turn, this allows those responsible for performance in each service to be **held to account for the delivery of sector wide standards.**

## 2.1. What is meant by a professional standard?

Fire and rescue services do not sit in isolation from other sectors. Many aspects of professional service delivery rely on functions that support the provision of specific fire related services (prevention, protection, response), these include Strategic Management, Human Resource Management, Legal Services, Procurement, Finance, Training and Development and Information Communication Technology. These functions have their own frameworks of standards. It is not the intention to replicate these supporting standards or develop "fire specific" versions of them.

It might be that there are some standards that fire and rescue services should align to (such as leadership standards) which will draw upon standards already established more widely. It may also be appropriate to draw attention to, or map across to these areas, but not to seek to change them, or comment on their quality, as they are not the sole responsibility of the fire and rescue service. It would, however, be appropriate for the Fire Standards Board to assess the extent to which standards set by other bodies (such as CIPD) should be adapted for use within the fire and rescue service context.

The scope of the standards that will be mapped, categorised and, where necessary, developed, will be those that relate to functions that are **directly applicable to fire and rescue services.** The broad areas that these apply to will include:

- Strategic deployment of fire and rescue service resources based on risk
- Prevention of fires and other emergencies
- Protection of people and property from fires and other emergencies
- Response to fire and other emergencies
- Business continuity and resilience to fires and other emergencies
- Workforce development within fire and rescue services (including professionalism, diversity and culture)

Clearly, such standards are applied at a number of levels, namely;

- Organisational (expectations of good practice that require contributions from different parts of the organisation).
- Functional (expectations of particular specialisms within each organisation)
- Individual (expectations of individuals carrying out specific roles).

In the majority of sectors, professional standards are considered to be the collective of a range of “products” which support the respective profession. These products are generally linked and include, but are not limited to:

- codes of practice
- guidance and support
- a national curriculum or career pathway for those working and looking to progress in the profession including role profiles, occupational standards and associated qualifications or accreditations

Standards that relate to the specification or use of equipment are not regarded as “professional standards” and therefore sit outside the scope of this report and the governance arrangement proposed below. These standards apply to professionals at all levels within fire and rescue services.

### **3. Workforce Development**

#### **3.1. NFCC People Strategy key components**

The NFCC have placed emphasis on these key aims within their People Strategy and this is forming the basis for a delivery programme, of which standards could be a part. The programmes aspirations are to:

- Strengthen leadership and line management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes
- Develop cultural values, ethics and behaviours which make the fire and rescue service a great place to work
- Provide ways of working that are able to respond to service needs
- Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public
- Continue to support the health and well-being of all of our people
- Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and creating a fair and equal place to work

#### **3.2. Career pathways and development**

Ensuring that standards are in place for the selection, training, development, progression and support of professionals throughout the service is essential as it is the performance of people with the right ability, personal qualities, skills and knowledge at all levels of the service that will lead to high quality service delivery.

Services already have access to a “Fire Professional Framework (FPF)” that acts as a reference point for some of the standards and qualifications, including National Occupational Standards. Further developing this framework so that components of it can be drawn upon by professionals in different disciplines and roles will be an important part of standards development work.

## 4. What standards currently exist?

The PSB project team have conducted a survey of all fire and rescue services in England. This maps standards and documented good practice currently used against the functional areas outlined above. The outputs of this work are shown in [Appendix A](#).

Most fire and rescue services point to professional standards that are drawn from other sectors. Very few identify standards that have been developed within the service. Where service specific standards are in place, such as NOG, there is already widespread use of them, which tends to suggest there will be an appetite for more when they are developed and made accessible. Use of available national standards will be a requirement within the new National Framework.

## 5. What are the key gaps?

The observations made in [Appendix A](#) are helpful in identifying where standards exist, or are commonly used. This does not reveal the full picture, though. Many recognised standards and benchmarks have become out of date or may not be of the quality that the sector would wish.

Specific examples of this include the use of Personal Qualities and Attributes (including leadership attributes) that were initially created as a part of the Integrated Personal Development System which date back to 2003. Other services mentioned using City and Guilds as a basis for qualifications for their staff. The appropriateness and quality of these is unknown.

Another example is that a number of services use the examinations of the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) at different levels to qualify their staff in professional/technical matters. These qualifications are generally regarded as being of high quality and relevant to professionals in the service. Although the IFE has affiliations with other educational bodies, there has been no specific sector-wide assurance of the appropriateness of these qualifications. Giving such assurance would be to the benefit of both the IFE and the sector.

The following is a summary of some of the other views expressed by fire and rescue services in response to the survey about standards, in general:

- A consistent understanding of what constitutes a “standard” needs to be fostered along with how they may best be accessed and used.
- The availability and use of a common suite of standards would improve efficiency and consistency.
- Professional standards need to be reviewed, modernised and made easily and openly accessible.
- A national picture of “what good looks like” is needed to replace a wide variety of standards generated by individual services.
- A central governance arrangement, comprising key stakeholders is needed to take oversight and “own” services’ standards.

- The development of professional standards need to be integrated with other work in creating good practice and not stand in isolation.

A summary of the key gaps will point to initial priorities within an initial work plan ([Appendix B](#)). This work is at high level and is not complete. The new independent board will prioritise future work through an approach that takes account of the needs of the sector and the following considerations:

- Known areas of underdeveloped and inconsistent standards identified through the PSB project team's research. ([Appendix A](#)).
- Relevance to and potential to support the fire reform agenda.
- Current areas of public concern and scrutiny, including the conclusions of the Hackitt review and the recommendations of the public enquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.
- Ongoing feedback as standards are reviewed and developed, including from HMICFRS.

Looking at these drivers, much work needs to be done, but there are some clear places where a start needs to be made, which are outlined below.

**Recommendation 1 – The need for the development and improvement of standards in the fire and rescue service is agreed.**

## 5.1. Leadership

Leadership is key to all aspects of change. The Government's fire reform agenda identifies three pillars; **efficiency and collaboration**; **accountability and transparency**; and **workforce reform** as areas for development. Developing leadership attributes across the sector will have a positive impact upon delivering against this agenda.

The response to the Hackitt review and the upcoming recommendations from the Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire may require changes to working practices across the services. These may require closer collaboration between services and other organisations with an interest in building safety.

There is also a clear need to continue to change the culture of the fire and rescue service to make it more diverse and welcoming of difference. High quality leadership will be needed to deliver all of the change that is desired.

From analysis of the PSB project team data, there is a lack of collective understanding and application of leadership standards in the fire and rescue service ([Appendix A](#)). When asked about standards in this area, some services conflate leadership of the organisation, including strategic leadership of change, with leadership of operational incidents (incident command).

Services can identify standards that are being used in both areas. In terms of organisational leadership, standards from the [Chartered Management Institute](#) (CMI) are identified as being in use, along with the [Institute of Leadership and Management](#) (ILM). In the development of leadership standards for fire and rescue services, the work proposed on a leadership model in the



NFCC People Strategy references these standards as a starting point to create specific expectations of fire and rescue service leaders at different levels.

As part of the development of leadership standards for fire and rescue services, it will be important to consider the development of a clear set of leadership values, alongside a more general code of ethics for all staff that will exemplify expected behaviour within the service.

In developing its leaders, the service has used bespoke training courses which represent a recognised qualification. The Executive Leadership Programme (ELP) is an example of this. Whilst the content and style of such programmes undoubtedly helps with the development of some individuals, it may not suit all or be the only way that leaders can be developed.

It is considered that the approach to selecting and developing leaders can be developed through the setting of appropriate expectations and desired outcomes (leadership standards), not by developing a single channel process through which individuals have to pass. In this way, the means by which leaders achieve those standards can be much more diverse. This will open opportunities to people who have achieved the standards through work in other industries and sectors, or through other learning and development routes.

It is also very difficult to address the current imbalance of diversity in services if the road to development is routed exclusively from within the service. As the current population of the service is predominantly white men, an internal selection and development system based on the operational leadership rank structure perpetuates this.

Cultural change can be delivered through leaders working to a set of clear values and ethics. This is one of the most difficult areas for the standards board to tackle. The drafting of worthy values and a framework of ethical behaviour that reflect a caring, supportive culture that invests in its staff, works in partnership with them and cares for their wellbeing is a relatively easy part of what needs to be done. However, implementation across 45 fire and rescue authorities with a range of different governance arrangements may present significant challenges.

This is an area where careful consideration will need to be given to the benefits realisation aspects of the work. How desired changes are delivered, monitored and measured will be a longer-term consideration of this work that may require significant investment. It will clearly involve close partnership working with HMICFRS.

Included in the work on culture there will need to be clear standards relating to the management of bullying and harassment, clear support to staff wellbeing and support in managing complaints and supporting whistle-blowing.

A further key area in driving change in fire and rescue services is the management of industrial relations. There is currently a protocol which is agreed and updated through the NJC. Dispute resolution mechanisms are also facilitated through the NJC along with some training for fire services.

Through the proposed leadership framework the service will need to ensure that managers are recruited and trained to understand how to create a positive industrial relations environment and the specific skills of negotiation and consultation. Alongside these specifics we also need to create environments which are supporting staff to be involved in decision making and move decisions to the right level.

**Recommendation 2: Consistent leadership standards for fire and rescue services (including values and a code of ethics) are developed.**

## 5.2. Risk Based Planning

All fire and rescue services in the UK, assess community risks and develop plans to address those risks. In England this is Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). Those plans should inform the deployment of all fire and rescue service resources in that area. Similar arrangements are made in the Devolved Administrations, although they are titled differently. Decisions about deployment of fire and rescue service resources is a matter for each fire and rescue authority, as advised by appropriate senior officers.

In this context “deployment” does not mean simply the disposition of fire stations and fire appliances. Instead, it means how each service structures itself to deliver all of its services, including prevention, protection, response business continuity, training, as well as all of its support services.

Analysis by the PSB team has identified that there is very little central guidance or good practice identified or available for fire and rescue services to draw upon in this area. As responsibility for community risk assessment is devolved to each fire and rescue authority, there is wide divergence in the;

- approach to risk assessment;
- analysis of the best ways to control the risks;
- split of resources between prevention, protection and response;
- nature and disposition of resources, including geographic locations and availability;
- levels and patterns of resourcing; and,
- evaluation of effectiveness.

The service that the public receive from the fire and rescue authority in their area is significantly defined by the quality of its risk assessment work. It also closely relates to how efficiently each service is deployed and the use of public money.

In respect of community risk assessment, it will be important to define the areas of risk that the fire and rescue service has lead responsibility for (such as the risk of fire) and those areas where the service is a supporting partner (such as improving community health).

In fire safety related matters, the fire and rescue services have statutory duties to address risks in communities. In other areas (home safety, health, and road safety) the fire and rescue services are

supporting other lead agencies. Standards development will need to recognise the difference between those functions that the service is obliged to carry out, and those where a risk based argument leads them to decide.

The standards board may wish to ensure that work in this area is pulled together and that best practice is identified. This will also form a useful benchmark for HMICFRS to evaluate how well this is done across England. Likewise, the findings of HMICFRS will contribute to the development of standards. Assurance arrangements in the Devolved Administrations may also want to draw upon and contribute to this work.

**Recommendation 3: Standards in how fire and rescue services should best deploy their resources to identify, assess and manage risks at strategic level in communities are developed.**

### 5.3. Prevention

Up to the end of September 2017, fire and rescue services had seen a reduction of 49% in fires over the last 10 years.

To be clear, for these purposes “Prevention” is the function of stopping incidents from occurring. In large part, this will relate to human behaviour which will, in turn, relate to lifestyle, poverty and other social circumstances, such as (for fire), drinking alcohol, drug use and smoking. Some other aspects relate to other factors such as electrical appliance safety or the promotion of measures such as fire safe cigarettes (that self-extinguish if left unattended).

This is as opposed to “Protection” (see below) which assumes that a developed fire is in progress and seeks to protect people and property from its effects by protecting the means of escape, containment, separation or automatic extinguishment. Accident prevention, including road accident and water safety prevention are also features of the Prevention area of work, although these are not statutory duties.

The PSB team’s work has identified a vast range of activities that are carried out in this area. Foremost amongst these are:

- **Targeting** – there is a significant effort across the UK to identify who “at risk” groups are and how they can be reached. This includes:
  - **Geographic targeting** – identifying *places* within communities that are more at risk and the nature of those risks, then determining appropriate interventions and delivering them in those areas.
  - **Social targeting** – identifying types of *people* that are more at risk, through the use of marketing and other social data, then identifying the best way to reach those people, who may be spread out throughout a wide geographic area.
  - **Partnership targeting** – working with *other services*, including health, police and social services to jointly identify common groups and geographical areas where joint or shared interventions will be most efficient and effective.

- **Intervention** – common groups who are at risk across the UK have been identified and in particular, interventions are being jointly created with partners, for:
  - Children and young people
  - Elderly frail and those with limited mobility
  - Those who smoke, drink alcohol and use drugs
  - Hoarders
  - Road safety and water safety
  - Electrical and white goods safety
- **Evaluation** – there is great difficulty in evaluating prevention work. By its nature, if it is successful, something that would have happened - doesn't happen. Measuring the *absence* of something is much more difficult than measuring the *delivery* of something. Huge efforts are being put into preventative work across the UK, of which the issues above are only a very brief summary.

During the period of the reduction of fires in the UK there have also been very significant societal and behavioural changes that may have affected the likelihood of fires occurring. In this context, although the overall trends suggest that prevention work is being successful, it is difficult to say which of these initiatives is the most successful, or which one represents the best value in terms of the public purse. The PSB team found little to suggest any consistent or reliable approach being taken to evaluating the quality and effectiveness of this work.

The standards that were identified in this business area and relevant related to issues such as safeguarding and other elements that support the delivery of this work whilst ensuring the safety and security of its recipients. These continue to be important but need to be supported by established good practice in other areas that relate to prevention work.

In particular, research could be commissioned that would develop a suite of evaluation standards, including a qualitative means to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives and help establish their value for money.

The pillars of reform particularly outline that “collaboration and efficiency” should feature strongly. At present, in the area of prevention there are many hundreds of separate initiatives across all fire and rescue services, although these have not been catalogued and monitored. Some are delivering fantastic results, even though the specific benefits are difficult to quantitatively measure. Further work to help good practice be identified and shared would enable the best, and most successful initiatives, to be replicated more widely.

**Recommendation 4: Collate current good practice on prevention and undertake research to set appropriate standards for delivery as well as quantitative and qualitative evaluation.**

## 5.4. Protection

This area relates to how people and property are protected from fires which occur. In this area, the fire and rescue service are a part of a wider system that includes building designers, regulators and inspectors.

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, fire protection in the UK is under very significant scrutiny. Standards within the service that relate to this work will need to be completely reviewed. At the time of writing Dame Judith Hackitt has produced an [interim report](#) and has indicated that the current system is not fit for purpose. Competence is a key area addressed in the interim report, Dame Judith Hackitt has asked industry to establish how competency requirements for key individuals involved in building and managing complex and high-risk buildings should change.

The NFCC are contributing to the industry led Hackitt Review working groups. Following publication of the review and assuming the recommendations in this paper are accepted, the standards board will be updated with the recommendations that have been accepted by Government. This is likely to significantly inform its future work.

The PSB team have gathered data about standards that operate in the protection functions within the fire and rescue service, which is included in the attachment at [Appendix A](#). It is already clear that there should be standards in place that:

- Support the enforcement of the fire safety order
- Improve the quality of fire investigation
- Provide a qualifications structure to ensure enforcement officers are competent

The standards board will oversee the development of standards in this area. Once further information is available from the inquiry and from Dame Hackitt's final report, the work on standards for protection can be properly scoped.

**Recommendation 5: Standards and good practice for fire protection should be reviewed as a high priority.**

## 5.5. Operational Response

Issues relating to deployment of resources, including operational response resources, are outlined in *Section 5.2 Risk Based Planning* above. Operational Response within this proposed theme of the work of the standards board relates to standards in delivering the deployed service to the public. This includes planning for, mobilising to, resolving and closing down incidents of all types and sizes, including multi-agency responses. These areas are what is now covered by [National Operational Guidance \(NOG\)](#). The standards board may wish to formally adopt NOG as a standard in this area of fire and rescue service work.

A National Operational Learning (NOL) system has been developed as a part of the NOG programme that draws feedback from fire and rescue services and will, in future, draw information from a wide range of national and international sources, including research, incidents in other countries, innovations within the profession and changes in legal structures.

A project is being scoped by the NFCC to look at the feasibility of creating a wider “organisational” learning system that will widen this work to include all aspects of fire and rescue service work. This will clearly be of great benefit to the work of a new standards board.

NOG has drawn a lot of the basis for its material from previous historical guidance documents. Some 8000 of these were initially considered and around 400 were found to have relevant material within them. This material has been drawn out of these documents and made a part of the new NOG database ([www.ukfrs.com](http://www.ukfrs.com)). A full review of the remaining legacy material needs to take place in order that complete clarity can be achieved about what represents good practice in operational response.

If a new standards board is to take oversight of NOG it will wish to ensure that the benefits of it are being realised. This will involve measuring the impact of continuing support to fire and rescue services in its adoption.

One of the concerns being raised as a result of the Grenfell tragedy is that firefighter training does not have sufficient content related to construction of buildings and fire safety measures. NOG has covered this area in great detail within the “fires in buildings” area of the guidance. A database where every element of structure, its expected performance in a fire and a summary of the firefighting actions has been created but has not yet become a part of all firefighter training. This further underlines the importance of taking oversight of benefits realisation as a key area for a new standards board to ensure that standards and good practice are actually implemented and used.

**Recommendation 6: NOG is adopted and implemented as a common standard for operational response, ensuring that national operational learning is considered in the development of new standards.**

## **5.6. Business continuity**

A wide range of issues can affect fire and rescue services’ ability to deliver their services. Clearly there needs to be expectations of each service that they have considered these matters and have put workable plans in place to minimise service disruption. As well as dealing with one off issues that may disrupt the service, these plans need to include the ability of each service to continue to provide services to the public during more prolonged periods of disruption, such as industrial action, without support of military resources.

**Recommendation 7: Common standards for business continuity are developed.**

## 5.7. Fire Professional Framework

A [Fire Professional Framework](#) (FPF) already exists within the UK fire and rescue service. It seeks to draw together relevant material for the development of firefighters and links to the sector's National Occupational Standards (NOS) which were developed as an element of the "Skills for Justice" sector standards.

Clearly a new standards board may wish to present its material in a way that is logical and accessible for the fire and rescue service and could decide to take oversight of NOS as an element of this. It is therefore proposed that, rather than closing down the existing FPF and starting a new repository for information from the standards board, that the current FPF could be assimilated by the standards board and made into a portal that encompasses all relevant information linked appropriately and is also fit for purpose for the new board. There is sector support for this. Implementing the decision will be a part of the management arrangements that are proposed later in this paper.

Essentially the "new" FPF will become a repository for material that supports professionals in the fire and rescue service in their performance. This will include access to all of the standards and good practice that the board will pull together and, in some cases, develop along with existing guidance and NOS and other products developed in future related to carer pathways. It is expected that, like NOG, this will become a digital interactive portal, not an inflexible series of documents.

The initial suggestions for the key areas of work for standards and good practice to be developed within that theme are:

- Roles, appraisal and individual performance
- Apprenticeships
- Diversity and Inclusion

These are briefly outlined below.

### 5.7.1. Roles, appraisal and individual performance

Within the FPF there will be material relating to the roles of staff within the fire and rescue service. The standards and good practice that will be collated and developed through work on the themes listed in *Section 5 - What are the key gaps?* will be applied to individual roles, wherever they are applicable.

The aspiration is for an individual to be able to identify all of the standards, qualifications if relevant), good practice, guidance and toolkits that apply to them and make it a basis for their continued professional development. This type of cross referencing and linking has been a highly successful as a part of the NOG programme and will be applied in the same way to this work.



At the point where the expectations of an individual are known, training and development can be designed to meet those expectations and it becomes easier to assess and appraise individual performance.

The quality of appraisal should itself be supported by the application of standards at all levels. Standards relating to mentoring and coaching should be identified and contextualised to support continuous improvement of staff performance.

The new standards board will clearly have significant interest in the NOS that relate to staff in the fire and rescue service. As the service seeks to reform its workforce it may wish to revisit the current roles of staff. Any work in this area will need to clearly recognise that changes in role for firefighting staff are a matter for negotiation within the National Joint Council (NJC). A close partnership will need to be maintained with the Employers side of the NJC in moving this work forward. Employer representation on any new standards board will be a vital element of this partnership.

#### **5.7.2. Apprenticeships**

Key to the future of all sectors and industries is the role of apprenticeships in equipping people with the skills and experience that they need to become successful professionals. The new trailblazer apprenticeship standards must align with the mainstream standards and expectations that apply to staff in the fire and rescue service. The standards board may wish to take responsibility for the ownership and maintenance of such standards as they are developed.

#### **5.7.3. Diversity and Inclusion**

Making the service more diverse in terms of who it employs will assist in driving cultural change (*see Section 5.1 - Leadership*). The UK has a highly diverse population, all of whom are served by fire and rescue services. The ethnic diversity in fire and rescue services simply does not reflect the communities they serve. The level of attraction and employment of women in the service is also very poor. Recruitment standards must be set to support positive action to address the current imbalances in the workforce.

The service must also go further than just creating fair standards at the point of entry. The standards board need to address the issue of standards setting and good practice that drives positive and radical action to dispel current public perceptions about the role of the firefighter and the people that are employed within the fire and rescue service.

Services must address the need for diversity by giving access to progression and ensuring an inclusive and welcoming culture. The service needs to be seen as an employer of choice that attracts the best people, at all levels and welcomes, in particular, the contributions that will be made by those from diverse ethnic backgrounds and from women.

**Recommendation 8: The Fire Professional Framework (FPF) is updated to include standards for selection, training, development and appraisal of FRS staff, apprenticeships, and supporting an increased focus on diversity in selection and progression processes.**



## 6. The status of centrally developed professional standards

In a localised governance arrangement, such as the fire and rescue service, responsibility for the performance of fire and rescue services is delegated to each fire and rescue authority (whatever its governance structure). The standards will be the benchmarks against which services are inspected and against which public expectations will be developed.

The importance and relevance of common national standards will be made clear in the National Framework. Fire and rescue services must pay due regard to the work of the standards board.

## 7. The options considered to deliver a solution

The PSB project team shortlisted four options which may be able to deliver professional standards, details of which are provided below:

- Option 1: The Fully Integrated Model (with the College of Policing - CoP)
- Option 2: The CoP Mirrored Model
- Option 3: The Collaborative Model
- Option 4: The Sector Led Model

These options have all been reported to the PSB Board in past papers, along with a full appraisal of each one. The issues against each are briefly summarised below.

### 7.1. Option 1: The Fully Integrated Model (College of Policing)

This model would have seen fire and rescue service professional standards being developed by the College of Policing (CoP) under their existing governance and organisational structures but with relevant additions or enhancements. This model would have required changes to both legislation that defines how the CoP operates and changes to their governance arrangements. Fire related “products” would have been produced by the existing CoP teams but would require increased capacity to existing CoP resources and significant input from fire-specific subject matter expertise.

This option would have “bolted on” standards relating to fire into a police environment. The time and expense involved in legislative changes along with the internal reorganisation and recruitment of fire staff to act as experts. The work would have sat separately to the work being done within the service, by the NFCC to improve sector practice through its programmes. Separate arrangements would have to have been made to fully engage the fire and rescue service in the development of any standards products.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the project has provided evidence that this approach may not be easily accepted by all stakeholders and therefore could have a negative impact on implementation and progress with professional standards.

## 7.2. Option 2: The CoP Mirrored Model

Similar to Option 1, this model would have operated under the CoP governance and operating structures - again requiring changes in legislation and governance. However, in this option fire specific staff would have mirrored those working on police products and all fire related products could have been developed by the fire specific team entirely separately to police products.

This option, effectively established a separate team of staff working within the CoP to deliver fire related standards. It would have to have the capacity to do its own project and programme management, engagement, consultation and quality assurance protocols. Again, the work would have sat separately to the work being done within the service, by the NFCC to improve sector practice through its programmes. Separate arrangements would have to have been made to fully engage the fire and rescue service in the development of any standards products and avoid silo working.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the project has provided evidence that this approach may not be easily accepted by all stakeholders and therefore could have a negative impact on implementation and progress with professional standards.

## 7.3. Option 3: The Collaborative Model (New organisation)

This model was based on an entirely separate organisation for fire, independently managed and run with its own governance, and appropriate stakeholder involvement. It would have worked closely with the CoP and likeminded organisations especially those newly established who have faced similar challenges, such as the College of Teaching. It would have drawn upon their expertise and experience where relevant to seek, explore and develop opportunities for collaboration on related areas of work.

This, again, proposed the establishment of a bespoke team, outside of the CoP and the NFCC but working closely with them commissioning work it could not deliver from the bespoke team. The estimated costs of the bespoke team based on conservative assumptions of the work required (£1.8m<sup>1</sup> for year one) would have to be funded by a government grant. Future sustainable funding would be needed to ensure ongoing development work and maintenance of developed products could continue. There is a risk that this model would develop additional structures, be perceived as a burden on services and have the potential for work to develop in isolation from work being commissioned by the NFCC in the delivery of its programmes.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the project has provided evidence that this approach may not be easily accepted by all stakeholders and therefore could have a negative impact on implementation and progress with professional standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on delivery of 3 standards areas per year

## 7.4. Option 4: The Sector Led Model

This model requires a strategic level standards board with an appropriate balance of independent and sector representation, to oversee and commission work on professional standards.

The initial work outlined in this paper to establish a professional standards framework and all on-going support and development work would be commissioned based on priority utilising existing resources and arrangements where possible. However, recognition that some additional capacity to existing teams would be required to deliver and support both the board and development work on standards.

Standards development work would be coordinated and delivered by the NFCC through its work programmes to ensure alignment to the commitment to the fire reform agenda as stated in the NFCC strategy.

Effectively, the standards board would specify, in detail, what it wants and how it should be developed. The NFCC would deliver those requirements to meet that specification utilising its various support hubs including the Fire Central Programme Office (CPO) and the UKR&D team (to which the sector already contribute funding for). In addition, the NFCC can provide access to relevant subject matter expertise (as and when required) and has an established consultation forum with services and other stakeholders. The standards board signs off on the standards when it is satisfied and assured about the quality of the resultant products. A successful example of this is the business model used to develop NOG through a centrally run team supported by all services.

This option allows integration of the production of standards alongside the NFCC programmes which were subject to a full engagement exercise and have the full support of Chief Fire Officers across the UK. No separate bespoke team is required. Instead, the capacity of existing resources services already fund can be enhanced and expanded to take on the additional work. Engagement, consultation, communication and assurance systems are already in place and will be reinforced to support standards development.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the project has shown that a sector-led approach will be more readily accepted by all stakeholders and therefore implementation is likely to be faster and more efficient.

Alongside the establishment of professional standards, the additional benefits of both coordination with national work and becoming the core of continuous improvement within the sector make this the preferred option.

## 7.5. Benefit v Risk Analysis

The benefits and risks to the sector were explored for all options and the results were discussed at previous PSB project board meetings. The table below summarises the key benefits and risks across the four options. This alongside the results of a more detailed feasibility study have led to the selection of Option 4 as the preferred option.

Risk	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Requires amendments to primary legislation (governance and operating model) – increased cost, time and effort to implement / deliver	✓	✓	✓	
Cumbersome and ineffective governance due to size of boards	✓	✓		
Diverts CoP from core purpose and strategic aims linked to building the profession of policing – slowing pace of reform to both sectors	✓	✓		
Lack of sector support requiring lengthy discussions and/or negotiations to resolve	✓	✓	✓	
Limited opportunity to utilise existing structures and the potential for duplication rather than efficiencies	✓	✓		
Costs outweigh benefits	✓	✓		
Limited certainty that products will meet sector expectations or requirements with the appropriate independent oversight and scrutiny (based on proven methodologies)	✓	✓	✓	

Benefit	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Independent from NFCC and HO but works closely with them	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independence of challenge and thinking (external scrutiny)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potential to contribute seamlessly to continuous improvement of sector by close alignment to NFCC strategy and work programmes			✓	✓
Potential to deliver professional standards framework contributing to required workforce reforms within expected timescales			✓	✓
Reduced timescales for implementation leading to increased pace of reform				✓
Potential to deliver collaboration on professional standards	✓	✓	✓	✓
Positive sector support and buy-in from all stakeholders				✓
Minimal legislation changes				✓
Low start-up cost and ongoing running costs				✓
Utilise and improve existing FRS structures			✓	✓

**Recommendation 9: Option 4 - the sector-led approach for the delivery of standards is agreed as the way forward.**

## 8. The key features of the proposed solution

There are three elements to the solution, these are:

- Independent governance
- Standards Management, Delivery and Maintenance
- Quality assurance

### 8.1. Governance

In considering appropriate governance arrangements for standards, evidence from feedback through sector engagement to date, has shown that standards and good practice are best if jointly owned by key representative stakeholders, namely;

- Government (Home Office)
- Employers (Local Government Association)
- Professional bodies (National Fire Chiefs Council)

It is exactly this combination of senior governance stakeholders, and the support they offered, that led to the success of the NOG programme. This was because the joint stakeholder ownership of the guidance at the topmost levels, lent huge credibility to the products. In leadership terms, it meant that senior stakeholders were genuinely jointly committed to the importance and quality of the work.

This sort of unified leadership within the sector has been rare, to date, and showed the seriousness with which each organisation regarded the work.

#### 8.1.1. Board Responsibilities and Independence

In considering representation on the board (including that from the Home Office), it is important to understand how it is proposed that the board will operate. It will *not* be the role of any new board to make isolated detailed decisions about the quality of the standards that are developed on their behalf.

The board will be responsible for taking oversight of a system of high quality development that will be managed by the NFCC/CPO. This development approach will take into account the best available information; uses the best available expertise; fully engage all relevant parts of the sector; fully consult on all of its products; and, be subject to an independent quality assurance regime agreed by the board (*see Section 8.3 - Quality Assurance*).

The board will determine whether this has been the case by examining all aspects of what has been done to develop the products, not to give arbitrary personal opinions about the detailed content. It will not, therefore, be necessary for board members to have expertise in matters relating to the fire profession to make appropriate decisions.

In this environment, it is suggested that those sponsoring the work – including the Home Office – should have a role on the board to ensure the investment they are making delivers value for money. Similarly, representatives of Employers from fire and rescue services will wish to be confident that the pooled resources that they have also committed are being well managed. Full board membership of the Employers (LGA) and Government (Home Office) will allow the “public voice” about the use of allocated resources to be heard.

Alternatively, if the Home Office chooses to take “observer” status on the board, this would still allow Home Office representatives to remain informed on the business of the FSB and professional standards development and it would support the sector-led approach being proposed. However, it would potentially limit the inclusion of the views of the Home Office in discussions and compromise their position should any decisions require a vote. Obviously, failure to meet a quorum may limit the ability of the board to progress actions.

### **8.1.2. Fire Standards Board**

As well as sector ownership, it is also desirable to also introduce a significant degree of independence into any governance arrangements. This is important to ensure that there is robust challenge to the status quo and an injection of advice related to the development of effective standards and good practice. Also, that there is no question of one or more of the key stakeholders attempting in any way to affect the rigour of the standards being set.

It is proposed that a new governance board is created called the Fire Standards Board (FSB) supported by the NFCC and CPO. The FSB will be concerned about the quality and availability of standards. They will also be responsible for oversight of the degree to which the standards are used, and their effect. This is a “business realisation” function that will be fully supported by the CPO. All standards development will include provision for engagement, communication, monitoring of implementation and measurement of their benefits.

It is further proposed that that the FSB is chaired by an individual who has familiarity and experience with standards and quality management from outside the sector and has a vice chair who is similarly appointed. These people will be recruited on a non-executive basis for an agreed number of days over the course of a year. They will be referred to as the “independent chair” and “independent vice chair” of the FSB. A budget for the salaries associated with these posts is included in the overall cost of resources that is outlined below.

Along with representation from the College of Policing, these appointments will help to achieve a balance between sector representation and independent representation from outside of the sector. The terms of reference will make clear that the chair of the board has the casting vote in the event of differing views being held.

The first stage in selecting the independent members of the board will be to draw up more detailed terms of reference for the FSB. From this it will be possible to create a profile of the individuals that would best be suited to the roles of chair and vice chair. An open invitation to apply can then be

publicised to candidates who meet the criteria within the profile, accompanied by an appropriate “head hunting” exercise to market the opportunity to suitable candidates.

Candidates could be considered from senior positions in other parts of the public sector, or from work in inspectorates, or from academia. The other stakeholders represented on the FSB will act as a panel to select the independent chair after a recruitment process that will be managed by the CPO, after a shortlisting exercise, if necessary.

Taking these actions to establish the board will be a priority for the CPO.

### **8.1.3. Board Membership**

Based on the above, the proposed membership at the FSB is:

#### **Independent and non- sector membership**

- Chair - (suggestion is post drawn from academia or representing public interest)
- Vice Chair – (suggestion is post drawn from academia or representing public interest)
- Co-opted director from the College of Policing

#### **Sector Representation**

- Professionals representative (NFCC)
- Home Office
- Employers / local governance (LGA)

FSB meetings will be arranged by the CPO, in accordance with a schedule agreed by the board members. Terms of reference will be drafted by the CPO following the principles outlined in this business case and will be agreed by FSB at the first full meeting. A work plan based on the proposals within [Appendix B](#) will also be considered at that initial meeting along with assurance protocols (*see 8.3 - Quality Assurance below*). Representatives from the CPO will attend the meeting to present work and administer the meeting, but will have no decision-making role.

Work that has been commissioned by the FSB will be considered by the NFCC in the context of the delivery of its programmes so that the most efficient means of delivery can be achieved. In many cases, this will mean integrating the delivery of standards “products” as part of the outputs of the appropriate programmes. It is not expected that there will be a completely separate means to deliver standards work as outlined below. This integrated approach will also ensure that any work on standards is compatible with the tools, guidance and doctrine being developed by the NFCC in the same areas.

This does not mean that standards will be indistinguishable from other work. Each product that has been commissioned by the FSB will be separately specified, progress checked and delivered back to the FSB in accordance with its requirements.



The NFCC already chairs a board that comprises all wider sector stakeholders to scrutinise and comment upon national operational guidance, called Operational Guidance Group (OGG). This group includes links with the Devolved Administrations, representative bodies, trade unions, BSI and the wider fire sector. As part of the arrangements for the new CPO and its governance is a plan to expand this group into an Engagement Forum where sector stakeholders can be involved in consideration of standards work. This will be one of the mechanisms to ensure sector wide engagement.

**Recommendation 10 – The governance arrangements for the Fire Standards Board are agreed.**

## **8.2. Standards management, delivery and maintenance**

The management, delivery and maintenance of standards will be carried out by the CPO. This is a newly organised NFCC team, who are hosted within London Fire Brigade, who are their employers.

The CPO team is built out of the expertise and experience acquired in delivering revised National Operational Guidance (NOG) over the last 6 years. It has developed significant high-quality programme and project management capacity which, now the NOG programme is reaching a conclusion, can now be expanded and applied to other areas of development, including standards.

The governance arrangements for the CPO are founded on the successful NOG model. The CPO must have clear governance arrangements in order to give its work direction and support. In short – it must report and be accountable to those who commission its work. Therefore, the governance and supporting model for standards and the FSB through the CPO, is based on this proven successful approach.

The CPO is currently funded through contributions from each fire and rescue service, which have been coordinated through the NFCC. The CPO is a NFCC hub that works closely with other “hubs” that support the NFCC. These include the central arrangements to support the NFCC itself, now managed through West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, and the arrangements that manage national resilience assets - hosted within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

The CPO is currently commissioned to deliver programmes and projects that support the NFCC strategy. The addition of standards delivery into the portfolio will mean a significant expansion of the work being commissioned and will come at significant additional cost which is set out below and in [Appendix C](#). However, using the existing CPO resources and the content of the programmes already being scoped, gives access to subject matter experts (SMEs) already working in the appropriate business areas.

Delivering the standards work in this way will fully engage all Chiefs in its development. The existing programmes are based on a strategy that has been agreed by the full Council. The programmes and projects are also led by Chiefs and supported by professionals within a wide range of fire and rescue services. Programme based delivery, involving all Chiefs in decision making and staff from across the service in its development ensures full support for the resultant products.



The CPO, through its work with NOG has well established stakeholder engagement and consultation arrangements that can be used to develop the work on standards. Further, it also uses existing support, administration, maintenance and business realisation resources. Whilst the resources of the CPO will have to be expanded to manage additional workload, by integration into existing work, the costs of replication of all these functions is eliminated. More details are in [Appendix C](#).

The CPO will not do development work themselves. Just as the NOG team did not write operational guidance. The team runs programmes and projects that are led by subject matter experts and pull in the additional expertise needed to do the work. The team uses the Cabinet Office “Managing Successful Programmes” methodology as a basis as well as “Prince2” project management protocols.

### **8.3. Quality Assurance**

To help the FSB be assured as to the quality of the products that are delivered back to it, a generic review and development process will be used which is in line with British Standards and many other sectors standards setting bodies. It is the same process followed by NOGP in the development of NOG.

As part of this process, all work on standards will be subject to independent assurance scrutiny before it is presented back to the FSB to be agreed. These assurance arrangements will involve an appropriate review by an organisation independent of the development process, the involvement of appropriate SMEs and appropriate levels of engagement with all other stakeholders during development and through consultation. Proposals for the appointment and engagement of appropriate independent assurance resources will be made at the first meeting of the Board. This is already a well-established approach established within NOG, where a credible external, independent risk consultancy (DNV) provide written assurance about the development of all products.

**Recommendation 11: That the arrangements for Governance, Delivery and Maintenance and Assurance of standards are agreed.**

## 9. Engagement

If the board approves the recommendations of this paper and subject to their approval by the Minister, stakeholders throughout the sector will need to be engaged to discuss its implications. It will be clear, however, that these discussions will be about how to ensure that this approach works to best effect, not to revisit the decision to create the FSB.

A full engagement and communications plan will be drawn up for consideration by the FSB. In the meantime, the NFCC/CPO will lead on the delivery of this work. This will entail:

- Using the contents of this business case will be used by the NFCC/CPO as a basis for the engagement of all key sector stakeholders. It will, in particular, emphasise the involvement of the NFCC, Employers representatives and the Home Office in the FSB and emphasise its independent nature and leadership.
- That the chair of the NFCC will attend the LGA fire service management committee, submit this paper and answer questions on the operation of these proposals.
- The implications of the paper will be considered at the next meeting of the NFCC.
- The proposals will be presented by the NFCC/CPO and discussed at the LGA fire conference on March 13th and 14th.
- The NFCC will present the proposals and discuss the implications at its Spring conference on 17th and 18th April.
- Representatives from the CPO will discuss the proposals with HMICFRS, all staff side groups including trade unions, professional associations, wider sector representatives (trade and industry) and devolved administrations during March and April.
- The CPO will organise several seminars for Chairs, Chiefs and other Principal Officers in June to cover all aspects of the CPO work. This will include a session on the Standards work.
- The CPO will commission articles in all key sector magazines.
- The CPO will organise a campaign on social media to communicate and promote the key decisions made within this paper.

**Recommendation 12: The initial engagement and communication plan is agreed.**

## 10. Funding and resources

It will be clear from this paper that the creation and implementation of a suite of standards across the English fire and rescue services is a very substantial portfolio of work. This paper contains only a very brief summary of some of the key areas. Assuming that this approach is agreed, the CPO will need to spend some time generating the capacity within its own team to deliver it. It will also need to recognise that a very substantial investment in the time of experts across the sector, and many from outside the sector will be needed to generate the work.

The NOG programme was focused on a single suite of products. It took a year to generate capacity and to commence delivery. It took a further 5 years to deliver 21 pieces of high quality Guidance that covered every aspect of operational service delivery along with a database that supports them.

The CPO starts with some capacity already generated by the legacy of NOG and has been making preparations to deliver programmes that relate to many of the areas outlined in this paper. So, projects to deliver standards can start within a few weeks. [Appendix B](#) outlines an initial work plan that is to establish the agreed arrangements, to more broadly scope the portfolio of work and agree the immediate priorities for delivery.

To set a sensible timetable for sustained delivery and make it affordable, it will be appropriate to plan the delivery of much of this work over a 5-year period and to budget on that basis where possible. At the end of this period, it is anticipated that all of the areas in this paper would have been substantially moved forward. Obviously, there will be initial priorities that will see products delivered within 9-12 months. Agreeing a multiyear programme is essential. Year on year funding is highly problematic when managing programmes and projects as this forces the programme timeline to be consistent with when budgets are agreed and set, rather than to run continuously over fiscal year ends.

A further Government spending review will take place in two years. It is therefore proposed that initial funding is committed for a two-year period and future funding is reviewed towards the end of this two-year period.

The Home Office has indicated that it will consider a request for “match funding” for the creation of standards and good practice. The NFCC has already agreed a levy on all fire and rescue services, modelled on their ability to contribute. This has resulted in the sector already contributing through:

- An agreed budget for the CPO for projects and programmes of £1.1m per annum
- A research and development facility of £0.3m per annum.  
This will support areas within programmes that require research, such as techniques for community risk assessment. This will inform the standards development work reported to the FSB.
- A project to review and develop more consistent approaches to fire and rescue service initiatives to engage and support children and young people for £0.25m per annum.  
This work falls within the “prevention” area of work and it is likely that standards and good practice relating to evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives & areas related to safeguarding will be generated as part of this work.

So, the total planned FRS contributions to furthering guidance, doctrine and standards is currently £1.65m for 2018/19. If it is assumed that the Home Office could match this funding with a further £1.5m it provides a working figure of £3.15m per annum to fund the standards and good practice development and implementation. Over a full 5 years, a total of £15.75m. In the initial three years of the programme, within the current spending review this equates to £9.45m.

As explained earlier, it will take some time to develop the capacity to deliver all of the desired products and put resources in place. The NOG experience makes clear that the initial stages of development are less resource intensive, but that resource requirements build up as more and more products start to be developed and delivered.

It is anticipated that during 2017/18 that there will be less spending. Rather than agree a scaled series of grants from the Home Office to match this (which would exceed £1.5m by the end), it is proposed that £1.5m in grant funding is provided to the CPO, through a grant to London Fire Brigade, for each of the initial two years of the programme. This is provided through the Mayor's office in an identical fashion to the process for NOG over the last 3 years. There will be an operating surplus at the end of earlier years of the programme, which will carry forward into subsequent years. It is likely that operating costs will exceed £3.15m per year by the end of the initial 3-year programme which will consume all of the allocated resources.

As the programme is developed and delivered, detailed reports relating to how budgets are being allocated and spent can be presented to the FSB, or separately to the Home Office, whichever is decided to be more appropriate.

### 10.1. Allocation of funding

There are two categories of spending that will support a portfolio of standards development.

1. **Portfolio support** – this includes the costs of establishing the FSB, paying the independent members, arranging for meeting support, preparation of papers, running a business realisation function, budget monitoring and management, communications support, assurance, travel and subsistence, conferences and events.
2. **Project and programme delivery** – this includes the costs of project and programme management, including project managers, project board members, secondments and external expertise from SMEs.

An initial structure of the central CPO team is attached at [Appendix C](#). This is the means by which the support functions are managed. It is evident that an element of resources in that structure relate to the maintenance of content already developed through NOG. Content maintenance will become a key issue for standards as they are developed. The Home Office have indicated that they see maintenance of content as an issue for the sector, not for central government. These costs are therefore fully covered by contributions from fire and rescue services.

The standards body are going to be driving a considerable volume of work through the programmes and projects they commission. Their proportion of development costs is higher and therefore this is reflected in those costs. Taking all these elements together, though, match funding of the whole package is achieved.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
CPO	1.50	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	9.30
Project Delivery	0.50	0.70	0.70	1.00	1.80	4.70

Support	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.50	1.75
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Total Expenditure	2.25	2.95	2.95	3.35	4.25	15.75
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NFCC Contribution	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	8.25
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HO Contribution	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	7.50
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Total Contributions	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	15.75
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**Recommendation 13. That match funding of £1.65m pa provided by fire and rescue services and £1.5m from Home Office support the delivery of the first two years of a five year programme of standards development.**

## 11. Next steps

A work plan is attached at [Appendix B](#) that lays out the initial work to create the standards body and commission the initial programme. This will be the actions that the CPO will take, subject to agreement of this paper.

As a result of the establishment of these arrangements and the transfer of responsibilities to the FSB and CPO, it is recommended that the Professional Standards Body Project Team is disbanded. Agreement of this paper will be the last action of the project board, which will not meet again.

**Recommendation 14: That the initial work plan for the implementation of the proposals in this paper are agreed and the PSB Project is disbanded.**

## 12. Summary of recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The need for the development and improvement of standards in the fire and rescue service is agreed.
2. Consistent leadership standards for fire and rescue services (including values and a code of ethics) are developed.
3. Standards in how fire and rescue services should best deploy their resources to identify, assess and manage risks at strategic level in communities are developed.
4. Collate current good practice on prevention and undertake research to set appropriate standards for delivery as well as quantitative and qualitative evaluation.
5. Standards and good practice for fire protection should be reviewed as a high priority.
6. NOG is adopted and implemented as a common standard for operational response, ensuring that national operational learning is considered in the development of new standards.
7. Common standards for business continuity are developed.
8. The Fire Professional Framework is updated to include standards for selection, training, development and appraisal of FRS staff, apprenticeships, and supporting an increased focus on diversity in selection and progression processes.
9. Option 4 - the sector-led approach for the delivery of standards is agreed.
10. The governance arrangements for the Fire Standards Board are agreed.
11. That the arrangements for Governance, Delivery and Maintenance and Assurance of standards are agreed.
12. The initial engagement and communication plan is agreed.
13. That match funding of £1.65m pa provided by fire and rescue services and £1.5m from Home Office support the delivery of the first two years of a five year programme of standards development.
14. That the initial work plan for the implementation of the proposals in this paper are agreed and the PSB is disbanded.

## Appendix A – Standards Survey and Gap Analysis

### 1. Survey Background

In April 2017 the PSB project team undertook an extensive survey across all UK fire and rescue services (FRS') to help establish the current standards landscape. It sought feedback on the standards or qualifications used across all areas of business for a fire and rescue service both organisational and individual standards.

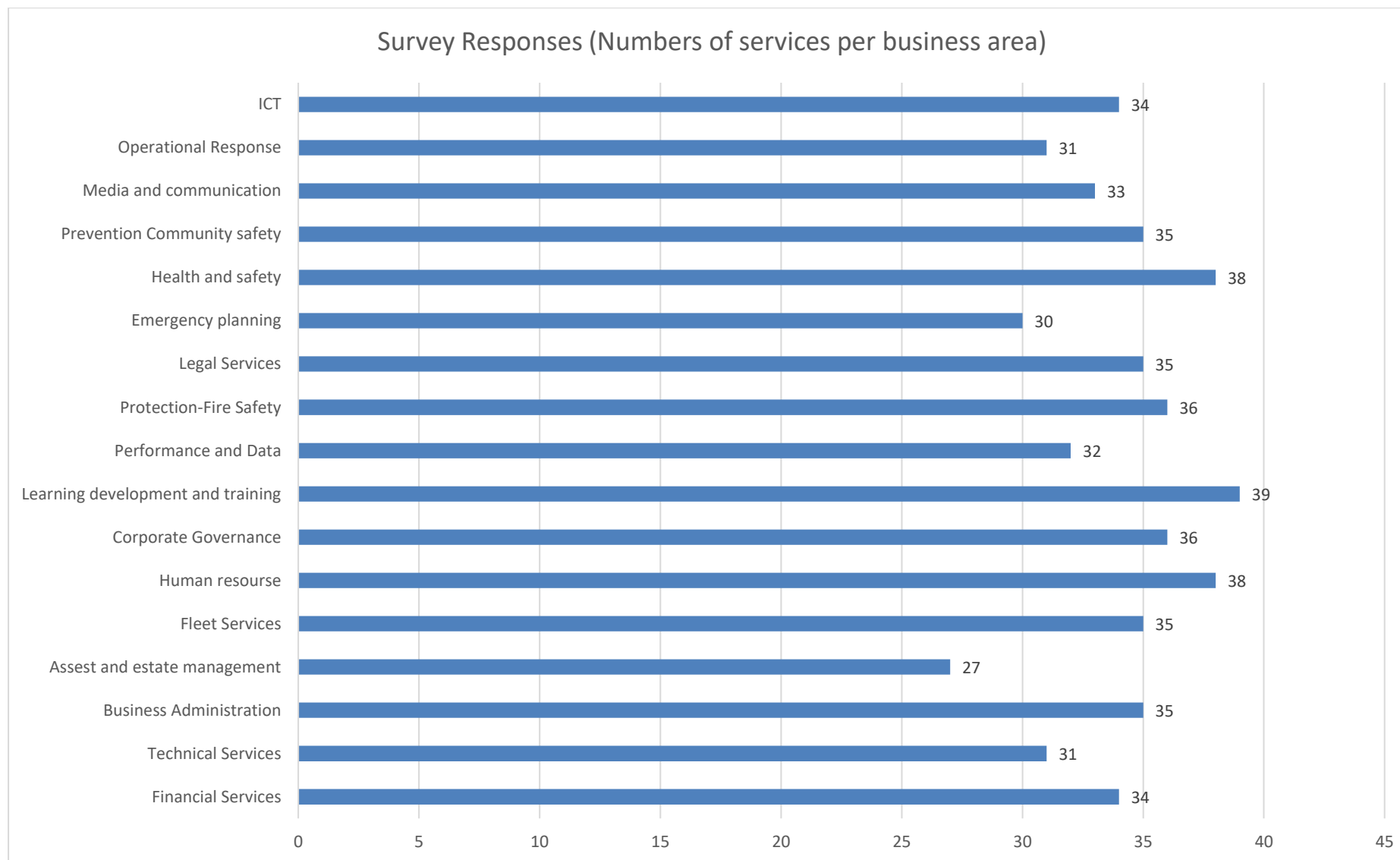
Survey questions were designed to ensure findings for all staff contract types and roles across the respective FRS' were captured in the results. Because of the number of business areas and functions that exist across services, there were multiple surveys issued resulting in multiple separate data sets to analyse. The chart on the following page illustrates the responses received from services against each survey.

#### 1.1. What constitutes a professional standard?

What became apparent from the initial survey responses was the interpretation of what constitutes a standard which was varied. This variation makes comparison between services and across the country difficult, it may also mean that more services than are shown in the results below do align to the same "standards" as their counterparts, but when responding to the survey, they did not consider that was what was being asked. It is proposed that a priority for the FSB will be to bring clarity to what is meant by a "professional standard".

The range of responses that was received included very prescriptive qualifications or accreditations such as those provided by the IFE and other examinations in areas such as operational firefighting or fire protection; guidance such as NOG and incident command levels; and initiatives such as those referenced for equality and diversity including the Disability Confident Scheme (Two Ticks), the latter being optional but seen as positive to align to.

Whilst the PSB team endeavoured to verify with each service the responses it had provided within the time available, it is proposed that as part of the initial work programme on standards, the survey results are further analysed and results shared. This would enable services to understand the national picture, further examine their own responses and potentially allow a more accurate picture of the current standards landscape to be established.

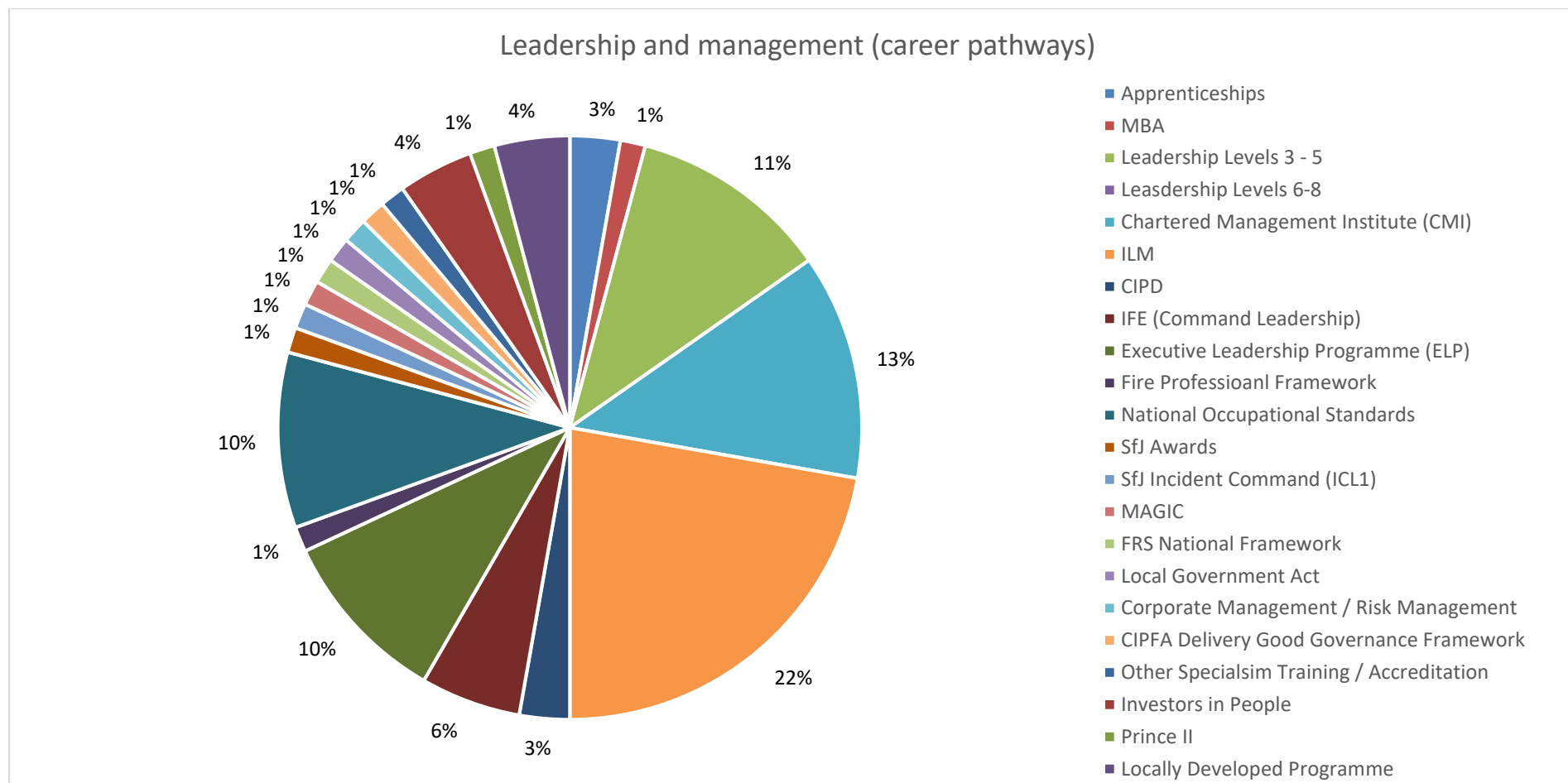




## 2. Leadership and Workforce Development

### 2.1. What exists already?

The chart below shows the range of approaches taken to developing leaders within the fire and rescue service currently.



## 2.2. Leadership and Management Models

In considering leadership and management of the workforce, it is essential to stress the subtle but important difference between the **incident command leadership model** and **organisational leadership model**.

**Incident command leadership** is very much based on hierarchy and structured tiers of command with specific duties and responsibilities at each level as outlined in the current Incident Command Guidance. This is the core of the command culture of fire and rescue and **works extremely well on the incident ground** where a single commander will issue commands to others to follow based on informed dynamic risk assessed information and many other things.

There are defined role maps based around National Occupational Standards (NOS) which provide the knowledge and understanding required at the various different operational ranks but these are closely aligned to the incident command leadership rather than organisational leadership requirements.

In the past the incident command leadership model has been the basis on which services develop leaders for fire and rescue services as organisations. However, there is a growing realisation that whilst some of the skills and attributes used in the incident command model are transferable, those required for successfully leading an organisation are subtly different, less autocratic and require a level of diversity in thought processes and knowledge.

There is much evidence and common thinking about effective **organisational leadership models**. The data suggests that many services have recognised this and have aligned their local programmes to leadership models which are widely recognised and used across many sectors. The primary examples are models promoted by both the [Chartered Management Institute](#) (CMI) and [Institute of Leadership & Management](#) (ILM).

In addition, the data shows that some services make use of the Executive Leadership Programme (ELP) which is fire specific, but other services follow alternative routes to develop leadership talent and skills. Some link to the non-fire specific nationally recognised leadership levels and behaviours - some do not. Some services support their staff attaining specific qualifications or accreditations and some do not.

### 2.3. Apprenticeships, career progression and continued professional development (CPD)

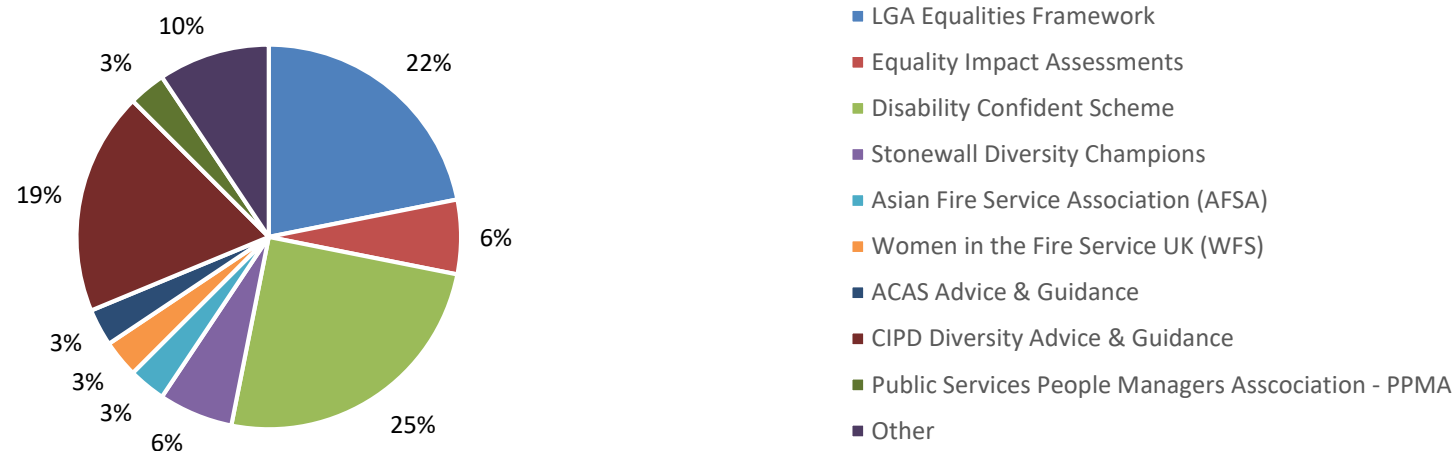
In 2016, the Government withdrew a number of existing apprenticeship frameworks following feedback from many sectors that they were not delivering the required outcomes from apprentices. The new trailblazer apprenticeship scheme is in its infancy but a firefighter apprenticeship framework has been developed and is awaiting final approval for use by services. There are plans to develop further apprenticeships in line with the leadership model and levels of management being proposed by the NFCC for development in 2018 – 2019. This, and the opportunity for the sector to become responsible for its own NOS, present an opportunity to align a career progression structure to the various apprenticeships, ensure the NOS are fit for purpose and address them if not, as well as bringing about consistency in job roles making it easier for staff to move between services with recognised skills, knowledge and experience.

In the survey responses, many services suggested that Continued Professional Development (CPD) was also key to developing leaders. However, it is important to draw the distinction between **self-driven CPD** (where individuals take responsibility for expanding their knowledge and skills via research, training or development programmes to support their aspirations to become leaders) and **maintenance of competence** (where individuals are measured against a defined set of skills and requirements to demonstrate a level of competence). The latter is something that the majority of services have well developed and practiced arrangements for although there is no “standard” for how services carry out maintenance of competence.

### 2.4. Equality & Diversity and Employee Relations

The following charts provide an overview of the various frameworks and accreditations that fire and rescue services currently align to in relation to equality & diversity and employee relations.

## Equality & Diversity



## Employee relations



The data shows that services currently align to recognised best practice and guidance produced either specifically for them (NJC Joint Protocol) or that produced by recognised specialist organisations or driven by national initiatives (Disability Confident Scheme and Stonewall in relation to E&D and ACAS and CIPD in relation to employee and industrial relations).

## 2.5. NFCC People Strategy

The issues with leadership, management and career pathways as well as with workforce diversity have been identified by the NFCC and plans to address them are within the NFCC People Strategy. However, the NFCC have made clear that qualifications and accreditations alone will not develop successful leaders. A defined leadership model aligned to recognised leadership attributes and behaviours along with defined CPD is key in identifying talent and developing good leaders for the future.

Within the NFCC People Strategy there is an element addressing workforce reforms which includes the need to develop a more diverse workforce, developing an ethical code of behaviours for all fire and rescue services and addressing expectations around common areas of workforce management and support.

There is already work underway to collate a library of generic templates for the variety of workforce management policies and supporting documentation based on industry recognised standards and best practice in use currently. The work to address ethics and standardisation of common policies will seek to address aspects such as the duty of care for staff and staff wellbeing, reporting and managing of complaints, bullying and harassment.

## 2.6. Gaps & Priorities

The primary observation from the data is the **broad range of approaches taken** in the area of leadership, management and workforce development.

There is currently nothing established within the fire and rescue service nationally to support services in adopting specific organisational leadership models or providing career pathways for leaders beyond the traditional uniformed rank structure which is bound by the current role maps overseen by the National Joint Council (NJC).

The priorities in the emerging leadership and any CPD framework should include:

- clarifying the difference between maintenance of competence (more closely aligned to operational effectiveness and assurance) versus true CPD and how we record and share that
- set out required behaviours and attributes at all levels without restricting services in selecting how they support staff in achieving those levels

Ensuring these priorities are addressed would help in the areas of recruitment and the transferring of staff between services.

The leadership model being proposed by the NFCC also seeks to address the issue of the existing Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA's)<sup>2</sup> that many services still currently follow but that are known to have lost currency so again, there is not consistent use of them. Importantly this approach will recognise the difference between what is expected of our leaders at differing levels including their skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviours but will allow local flexibility in how services ensure their staff achieve those expectations.

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<sup>2</sup> Details about the existing PQA's can be found [here](#)

### 3. Strategic deployment of fire and rescue service resources based on risk

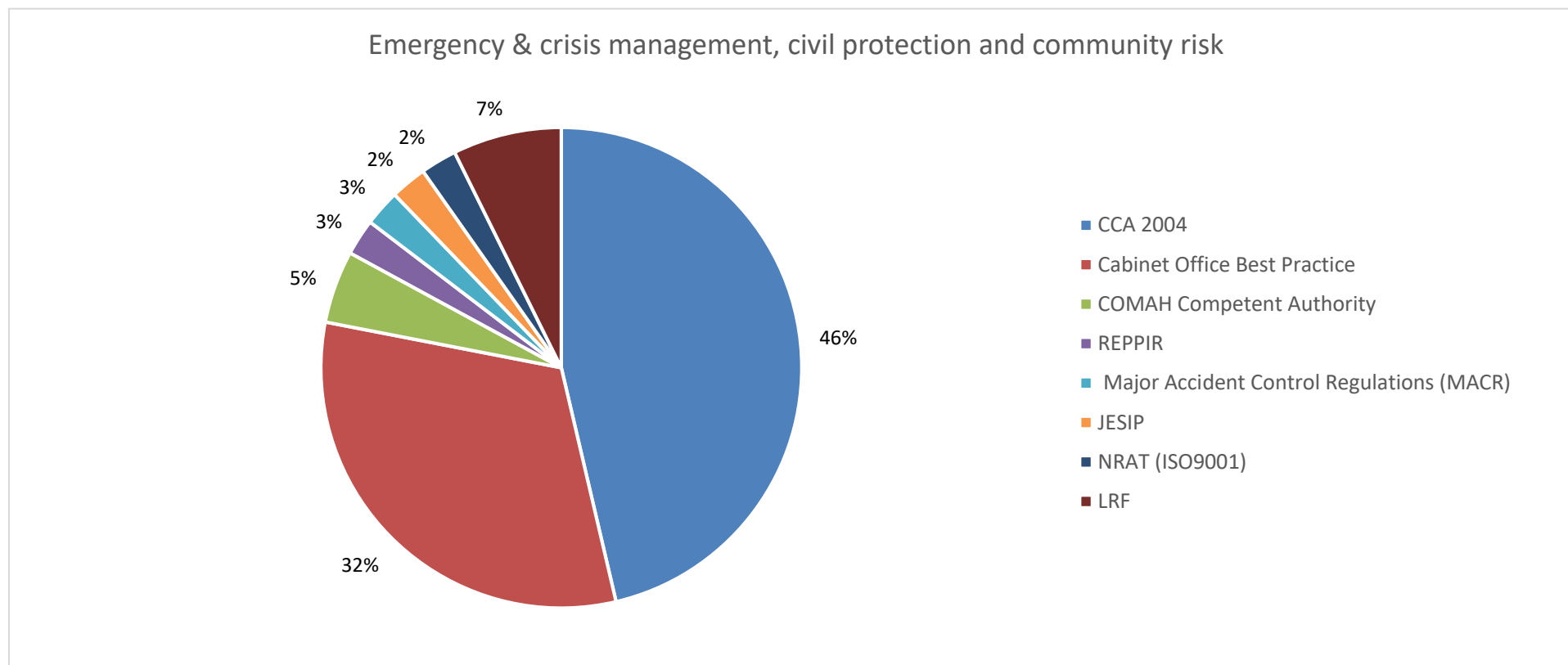
#### 3.1. What exists already

This relates to community risk assessment and ensuring services have the appropriate resources and capabilities to deploy. Areas such as strategic planning and risk management, emergency and crisis management as well as community risk are all functions that contribute to the strategic deployment of service resources.

#### 3.2. Community risk assessment, emergency planning and management

In relation to community and corporate risk assessment, the charts below again show a broad range of standards in use or referenced.



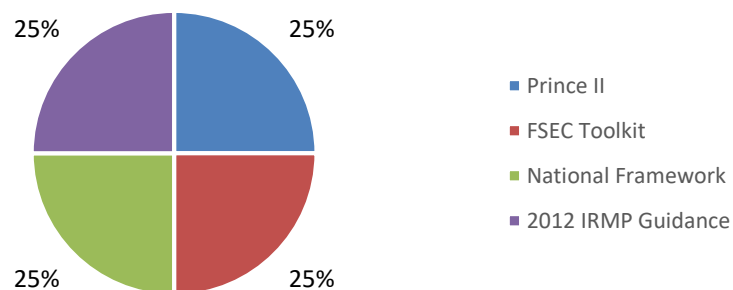


As you would expect, many services align to legislation where it exists such as the Civil Contingencies Act and supporting guidance from the Cabinet Office and the National Fire Framework. In other areas such as risk management and information management services reference a number of nationally and internationally recognised BSI or ISO standards.

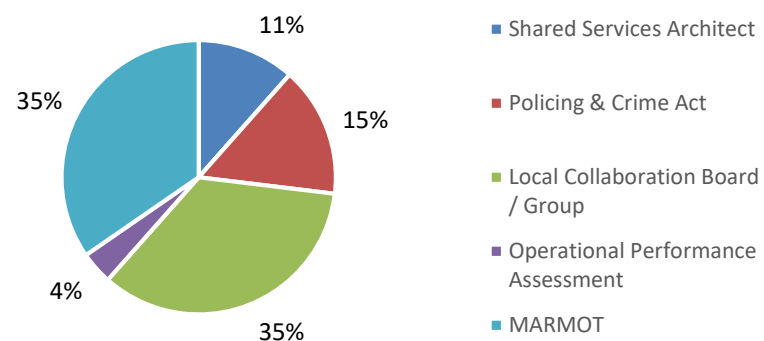
For those functions that support corporate and strategic planning, the charts below demonstrate there are fewer standards or national guidance referenced, especially in relation to preparation of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) or equivalents used in Devolved Administrations.



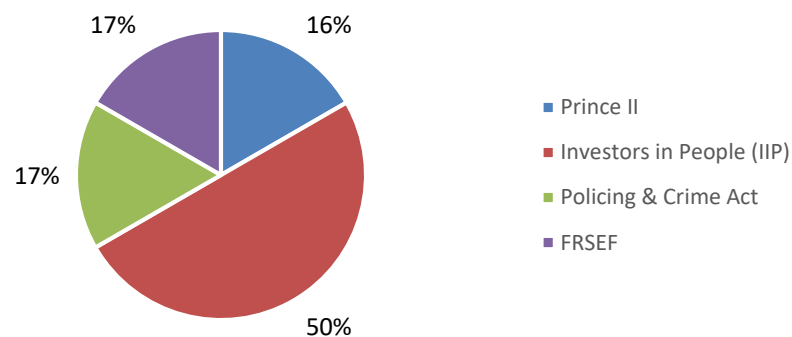
### IRMP



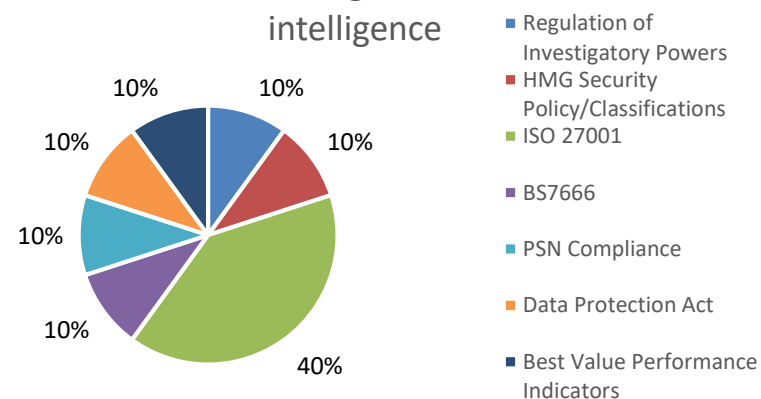
### Collaboration



### Strategic planning & organisational change



### Information management & business intelligence



## 4. NFCC Community Risk Programme

The work that is proposed by the NFCC in developing guidance based on best practice in relation to community risk assessment and the formulation of plans<sup>3</sup> to address them, aims to bring clarity to the key elements of overall risk management planning for services. (in England the Integrated Risk Management Plan or IRMP, equivalents are used in the Devolved Administrations). This will also generate a professional standard specific to fire and rescue services.

### 4.1. Gaps and Priorities

There is currently no clear guidance or minimal expectations for services as they prepare and write their service-specific integrated risk management plans (or equivalents).

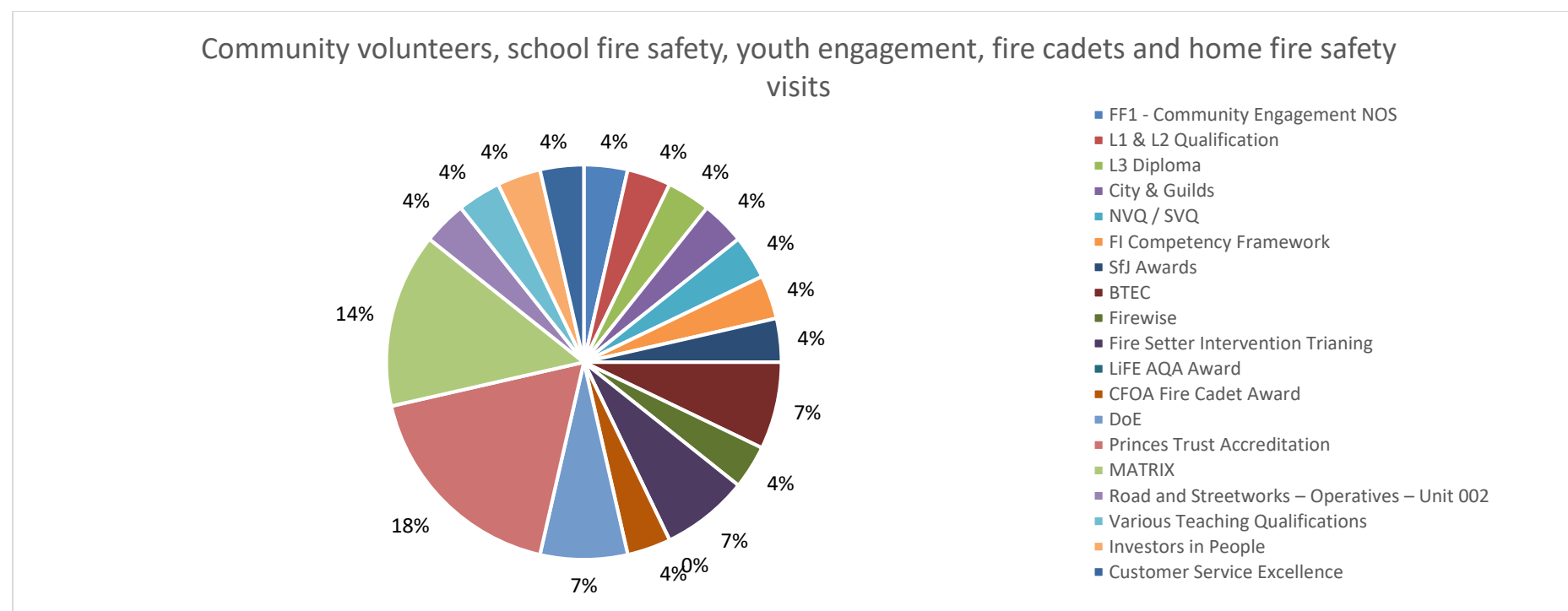
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<sup>3</sup> Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) in England or their equivalents used in the Devolved Administrations

## 5. Prevention of fires and other emergencies

### 5.1. What exists already?

The charts in this section cover the functions that contribute to the prevention activities across all fire and rescue services. Primarily this is focused on community engagement from the provision of home fire safety visits and work with vulnerable communities through to fire cadets, children and young people and work on road safety.

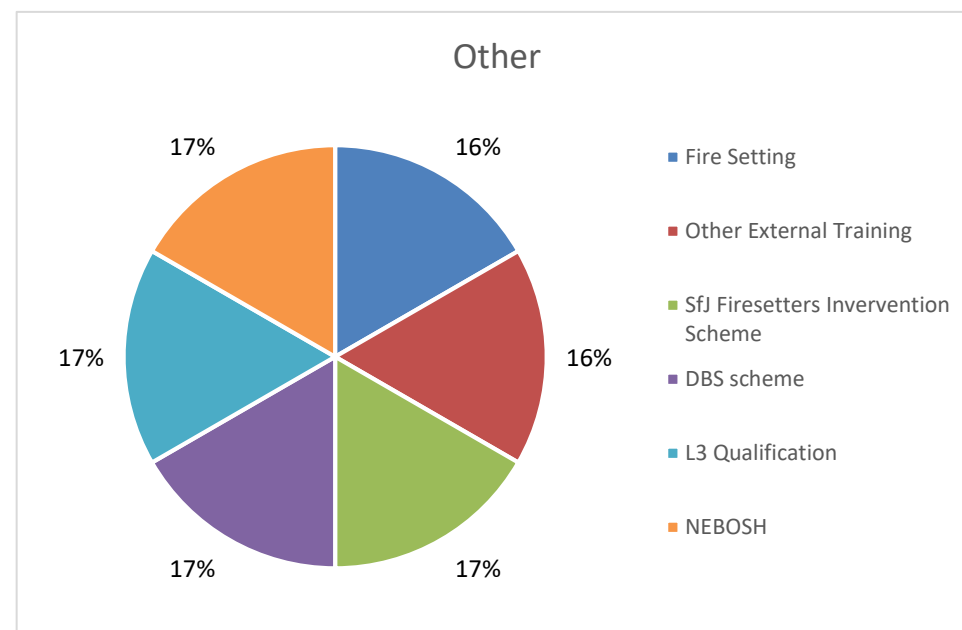
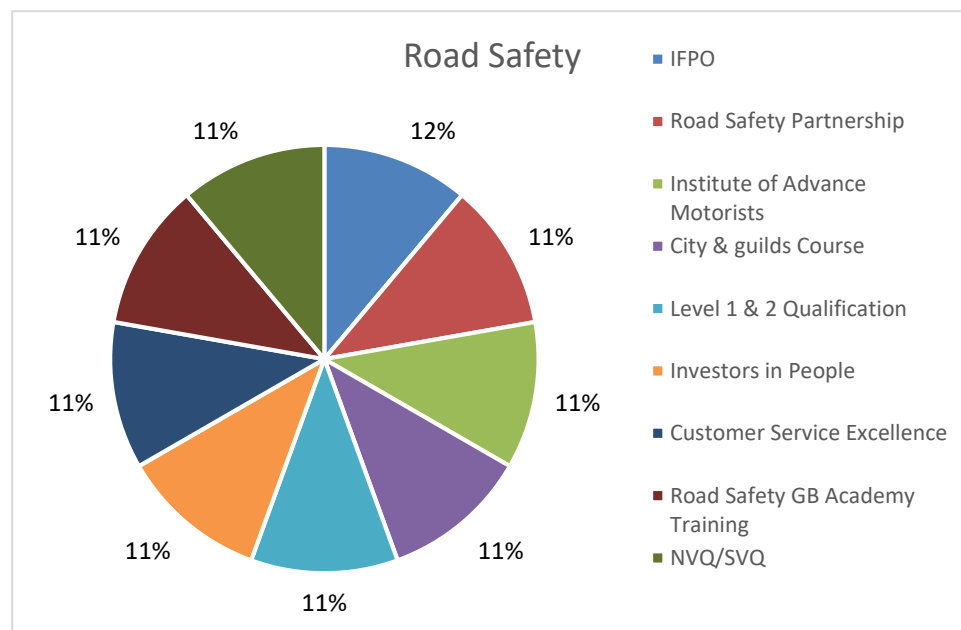


The range of community engagement related standards and accreditations is currently quite broad. This inconsistency makes assurance of the effectiveness of each one and comparison between them, difficult. Before definitive decisions may be taken on professional standards for community engagement activity further, more detailed research would be required.

There were no specific returns in relation to standards for home fire safety visits which indicates all services have developed a locally led approach potentially building again on local need and collaboration with other agencies and on the duty placed on services some years ago to ensure all homes had a working smoke detector.

## 5.2. Road Safety & Other Prevention Activity

With regards to prevention activities relating to road safety and other areas such as tackling arson, Princes Trust accredited programmes and other youth engagement awards, there is evidence from the survey data of a more defined range of legislation, standards, guidance and qualifications referenced. Again, differing governance models will impact on what is delivered locally with provision for such things as safeguarding training primarily provided through local authorities.

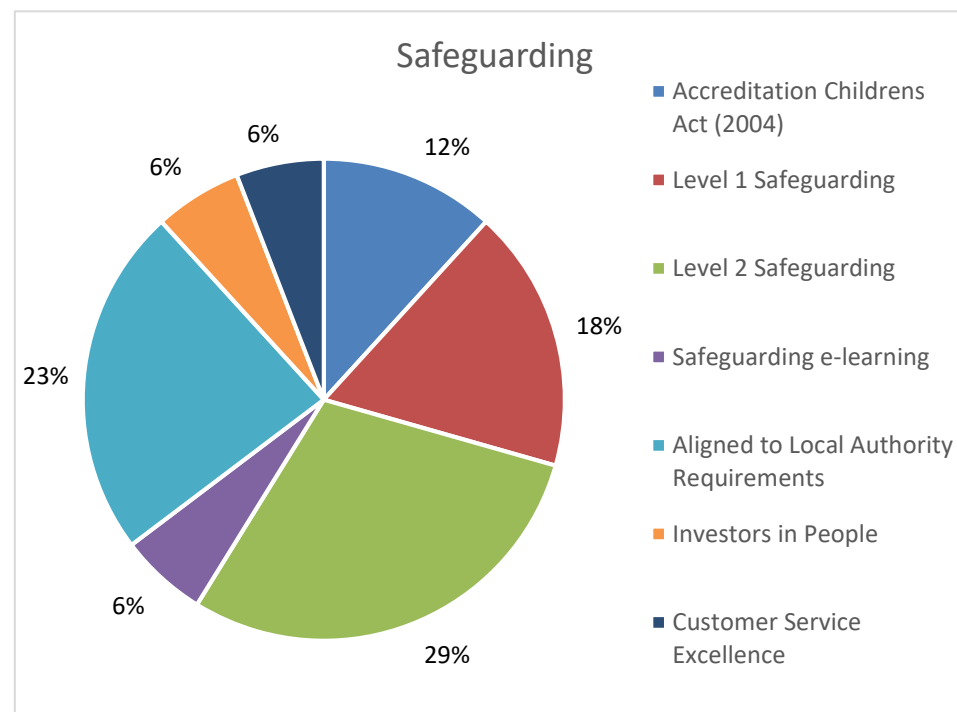


### 5.3. Safeguarding

There is strong evidence that all services have a provision for providing appropriate safeguarding training in line with both legislative requirements and standards. In addition, there appears to be alignment to safeguarding policies and procedures and many services are members of local authority safeguarding boards.

There is evidence of services following locally developed policies and training in line with the relevant legal frameworks and duties on public sector bodies. This activity frequently appears to be linked to partner organisations or local authorities showing existing collaborations or partnership working.

An example of this includes the provision of the DBS scheme. There is evidence of alignment to some broader accreditations such as Investors in People and Customer Service Excellence however, there is no supporting evidence at this time to gauge the value and effectiveness of organisations gaining these accreditations.



### 5.4. Gaps & Priorities

There is clear evidence that providing some guidance and minimal expectations for services as they prepare their IRMP's or equivalents would help reduce the variations in approaches taken, clarify some core definitions and allow improved comparability across the country. However, it will be important these guidelines are flexible enough to allow for varying local needs and budgets.

## 6. Protection of people and property from fires and other emergencies

### 6.1. What exists already?

The charts in this section focus on inspection and enforcement of the Fire Safety Order, fire investigation (investigation of an incident scene in conjunction with police investigators and forensics officers) and other fire safety activities. It is important to note that there are likely to be findings following the Grenfell Towers incident that may impact on this aspect of fire and rescue services policies and ways of working.

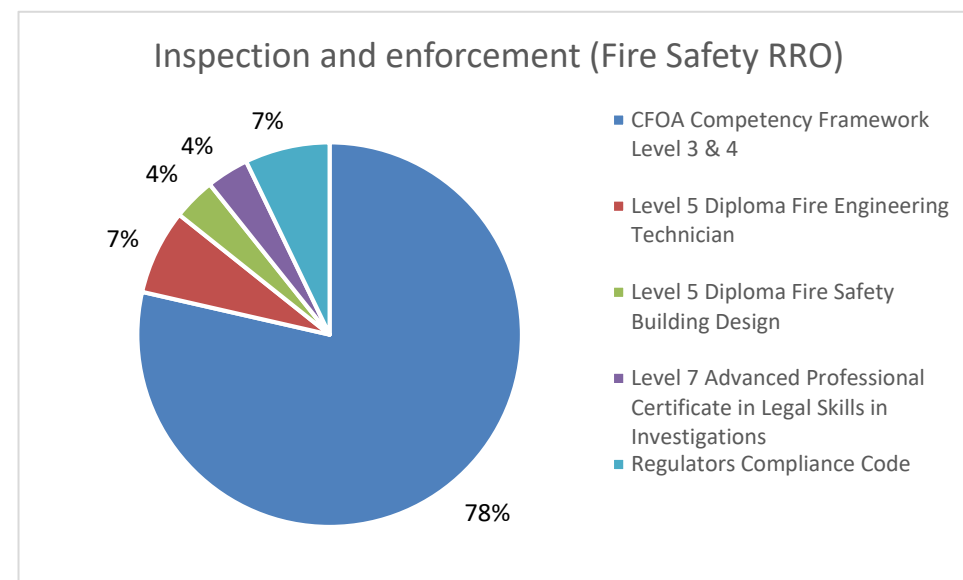
In the area of fire protection or fire safety, there is evidence of a range of qualifications and training aligned to the fire safety and fire investigation NOS.

### 6.2. Inspection and Enforcement (Fire Safety)

This area has seen some central coordination of guidance, most recently the release of the [CFOA Competency Framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators](#). This has brought together all relevant information and expectations including skills, knowledge and understanding for those with roles involved in the enforcement of the Fire Safety RRO.

There is strong evidence as is evidenced in the chart to the right, that this centrally produced guidance and competency framework is well supported and used by services.

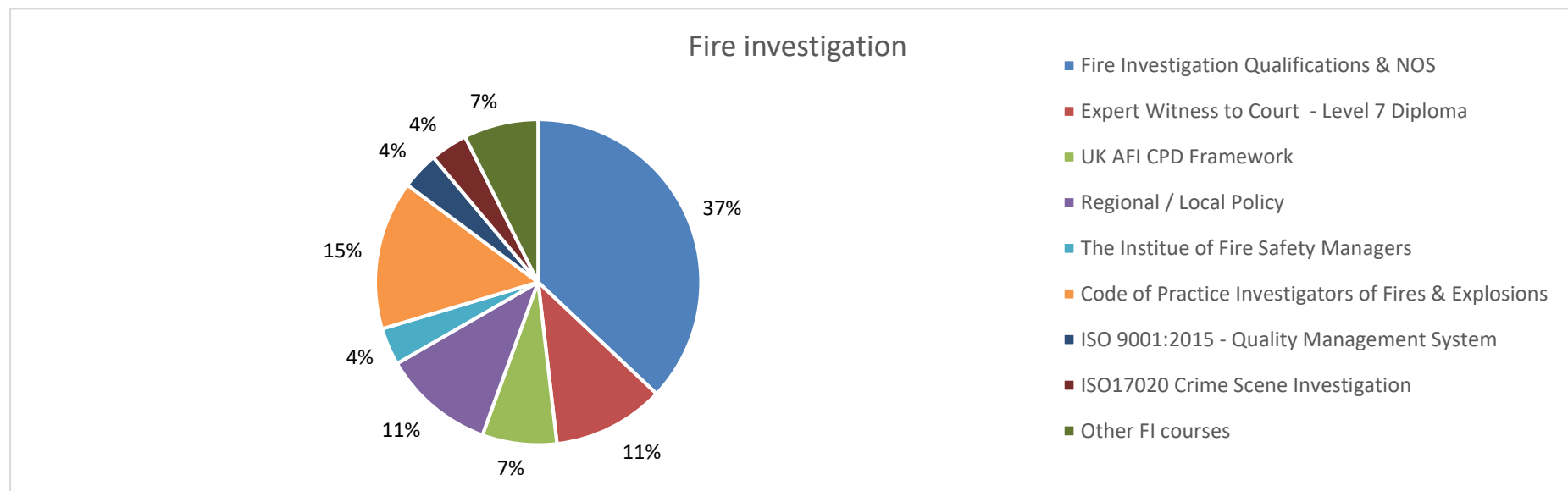
There is evidence of services providing staff the opportunity to expand their knowledge in other areas such as legal training as well a number of other courses or specialisms



### 6.3. Fire Investigation

Again, there are well established qualifications linked to NOS for fire investigation as shown in the chart below. Recently the CFOA Competency Framework for Fire Scene Investigators has been launched which was jointly endorsed by CFOA, the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) and the United Kingdom Association of Fire Investigators (UK AFI). It links to a UK AFI Code of Practice. However, it has not been available for services to embed for the same length of time as the Competency Framework for Fire Safety.

The charts show firstly the organisational standards and guidance aligned to in this area but also the standards, qualifications or accreditations for individuals from practitioner through to strategic levels of staff.



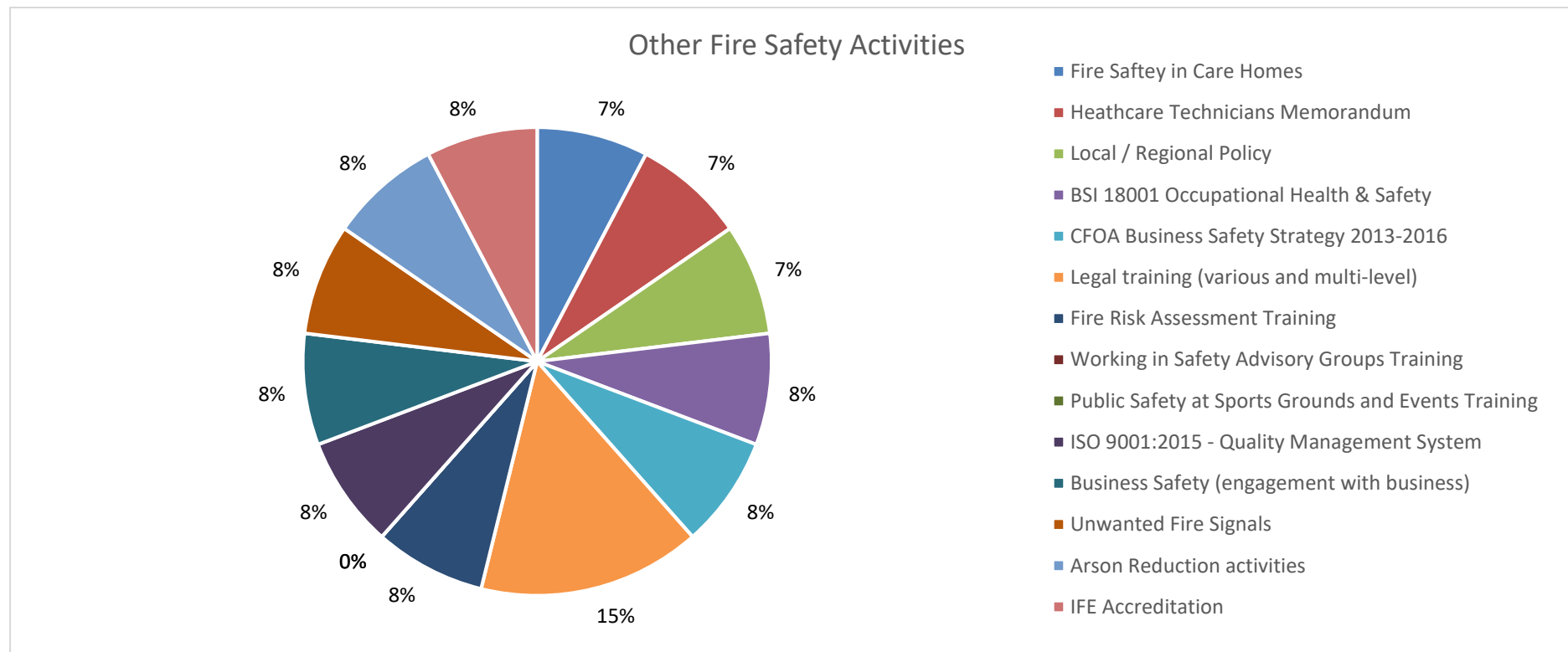
## Fire Safety Qualifications and Accreditations





## 6.4. Other Fire Safety Activity

The chart below shows the broad range of other fire safety related areas that fire and rescue services are involved with linked to their duty to enforce the fire safety order. This includes care homes, public arenas and sports facilities as well as issues with unwanted fire signals from business premises and working with businesses to better comply with fire safety legislation.



In the area of Fire Protection particularly, it is evident that where there is guidance or a framework developed through the sector and nationally recognised, the majority of services will follow that guidance or are working towards it.

## 6.5. Gaps and priorities

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, upcoming recommendations from the Hackitt review and the full inquiry is likely to lead to a requirement to change some working practices in fire protection. From the interim report produced by Dame Judith Hackitt, competence and training are key areas that have been highlighted for review.

Whilst the fire protection area appears to be well provisioned with NOS and qualifications, it would appear there is likely to be requirements for standards that:

- Support the enforcement of the fire safety order.
- Improve the quality of fire investigation.
- Provide a qualifications and competency structure for enforcement officers.

It is proposed the fire standards board are provided with the recommendations and any supporting information available at the time of the first meeting to clarify what is required as a priority in this area

## 7. Response to fire and other emergencies

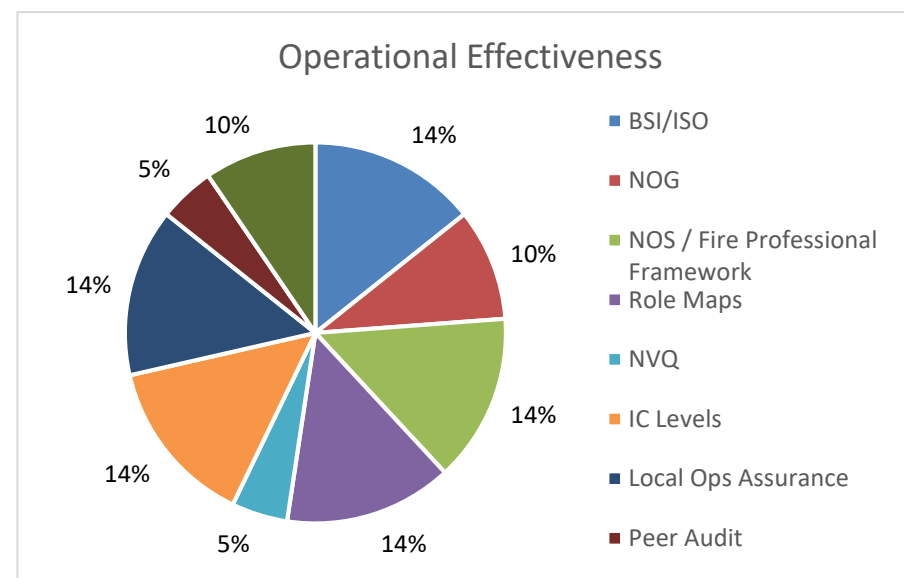
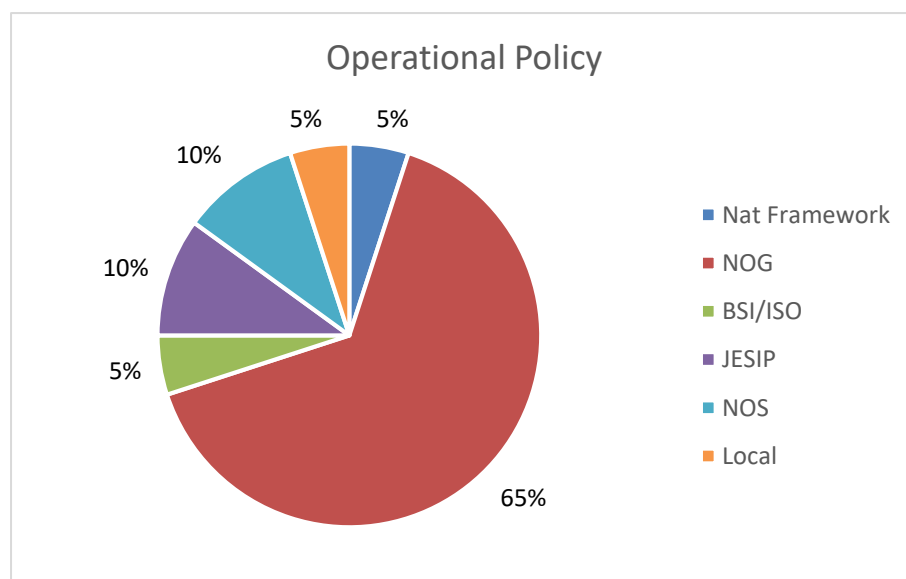
### 7.1. What exists already?

### 7.2. Operational Policy & Effectiveness

Whilst there is still some variety in the standards applied in the operational response areas, there is evidence of larger numbers of services following nationally recognise standards such as the National Operational Guidance (NOG) and the Fire Professional Framework which incorporates the role maps and NOS.

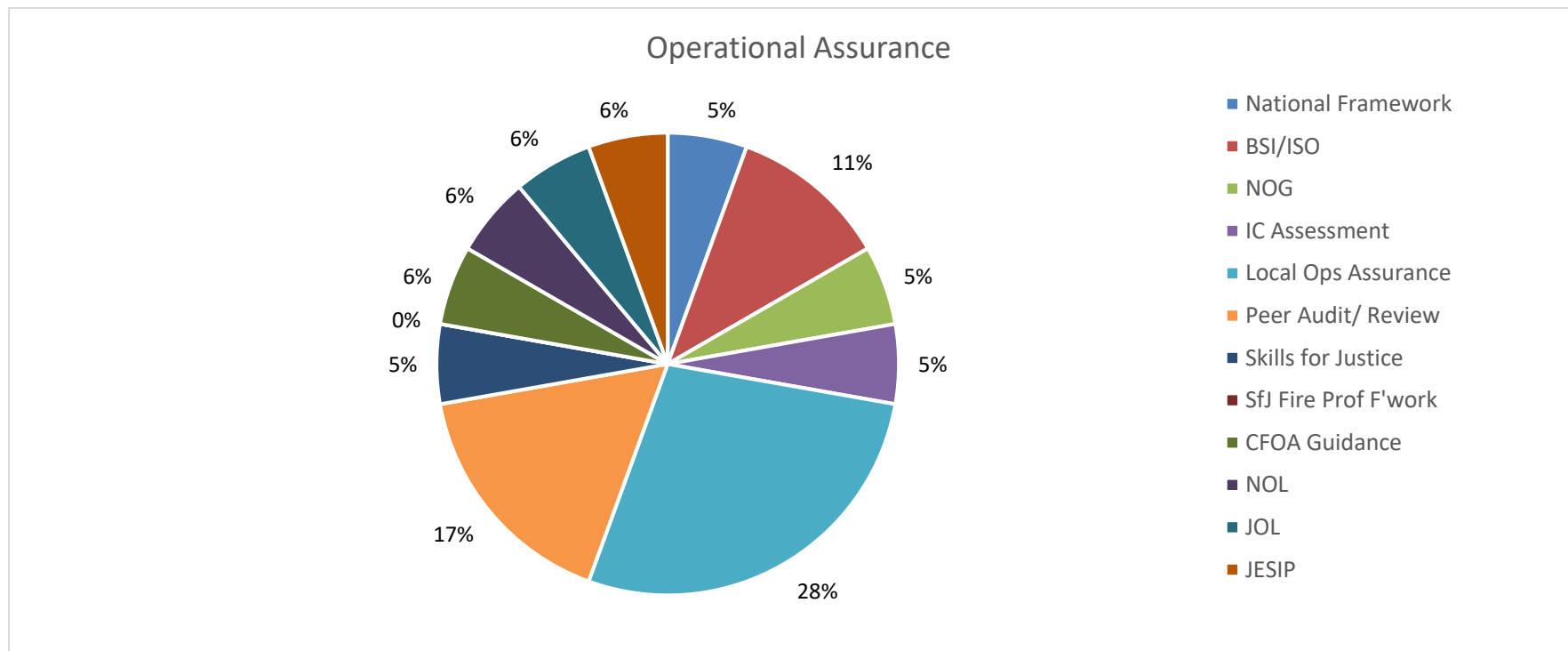
This is further evidence that where recognised national standards exist, services will follow them or work towards following them bringing about a more consistent picture and reducing duplication of developing multiple local alternatives.

The charts below show the responses in relation to operational policy (explaining what to do), operational effectiveness (checking how effective what we do is) and operational and overall assurance (the methods by which we check our effectiveness and provide assurance of competency).

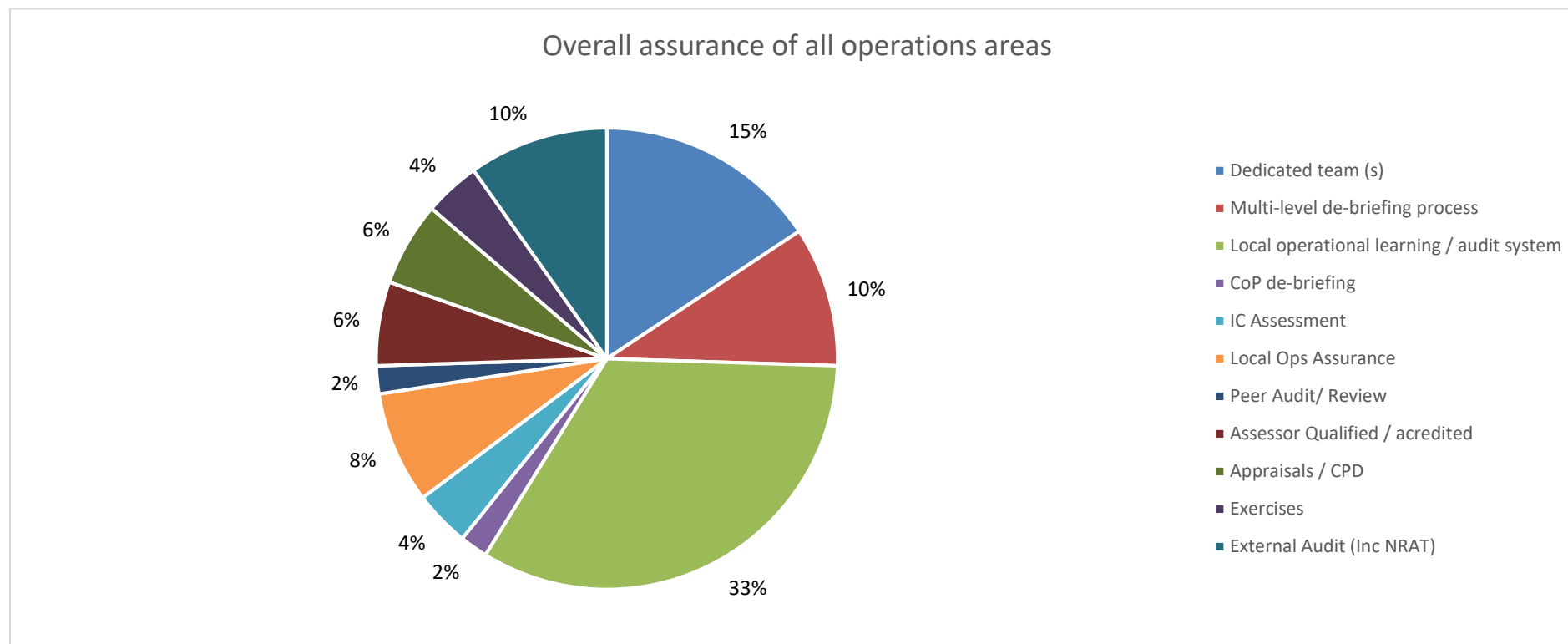


### 7.3. Operational Assurance

The chart below shows the range of standards and or polices, frameworks of guidance that services believe they currently assure against. With the introduction of the inspection arrangements and the inspection framework combined with the establishment of professional standards, this picture will be much clearer in future.



This chart shows the methods by which services are currently assessing their own operational competence.



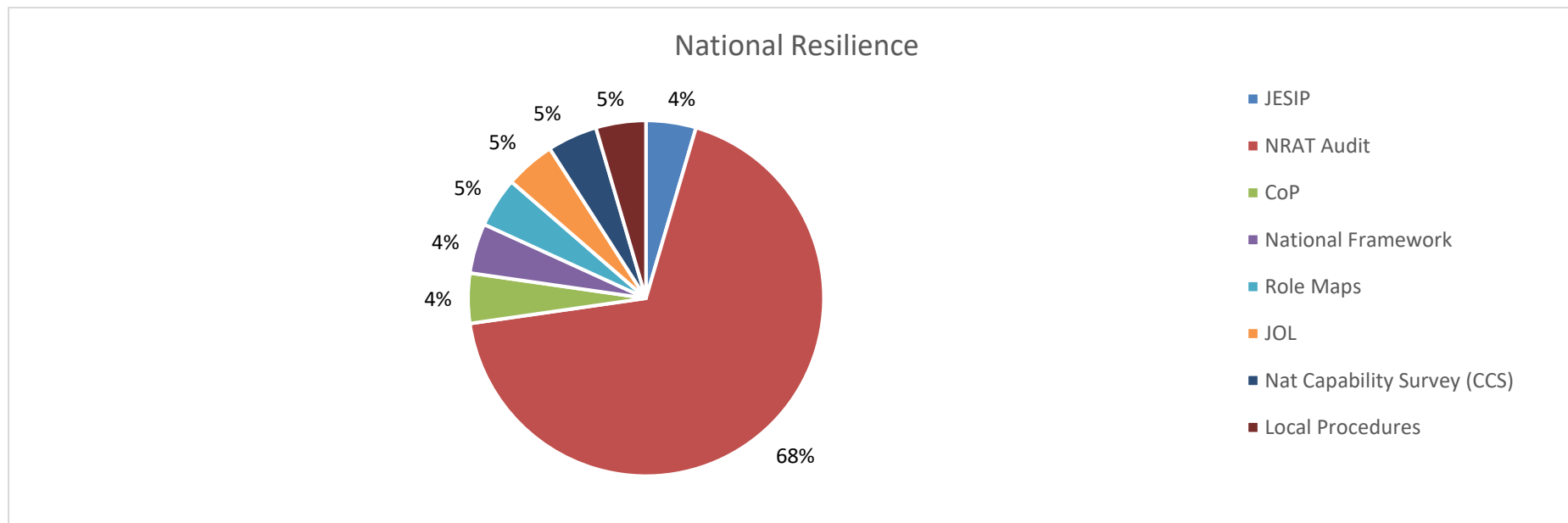
#### 7.4. Gaps and Priorities

Whilst it is evident progress with embedding use of NOG is well underway, efforts to ensure this continues should continue. In addition, the NOG should be maintained to ensure it remains current and evolves based on learning coming from the sector and HMICFRS inspection findings.

Linked to *Section 5.1 Leadership* there is scope to explore standards and guidance in the area of operational effectiveness to ensure there is consistency with regards to assurance of operational competency.

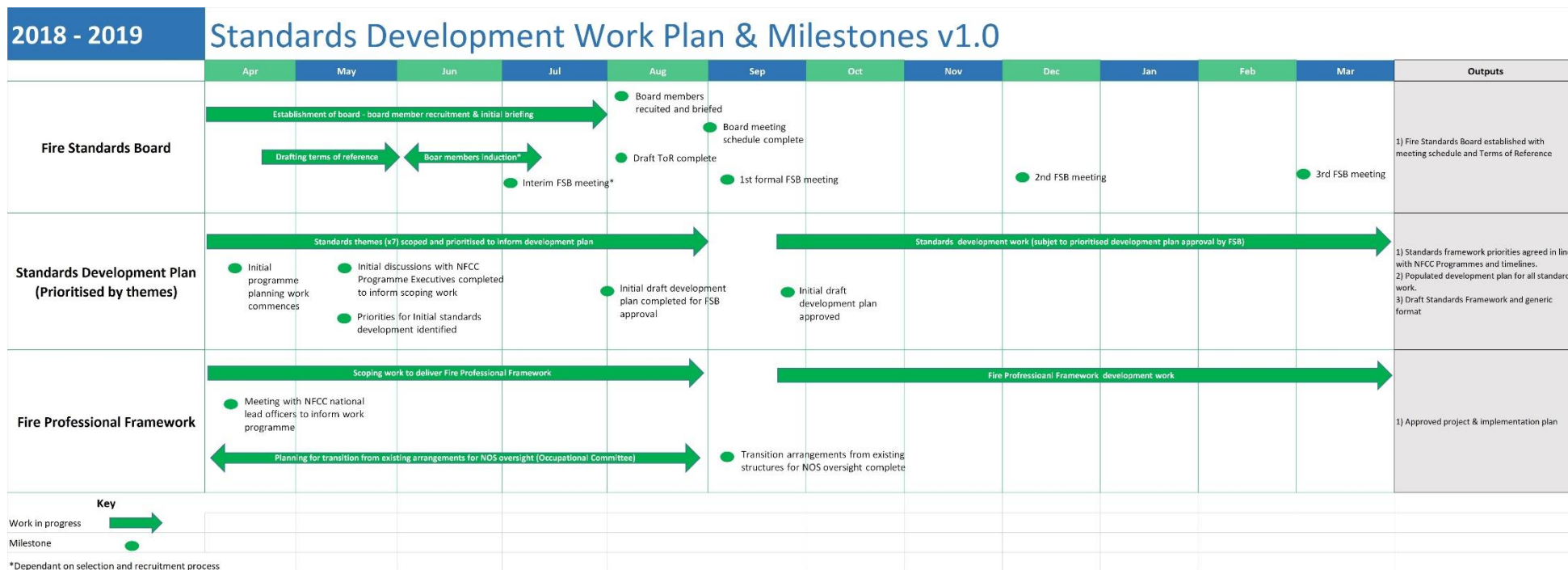
## 7.5. National Resilience

A number of services have national resilience assets and staff that must be trained appropriately to mobilise that capability. The national resilience arrangements are coordinated by a national team based out of Merseyside FRS. They provide the assurance of the training services deliver and ensure the relevant services remain in line with national resilience standards laid out in the National Resilience Capability Framework (NCAF).



From the data shown above, it is clearly apparent that services remain in line with the expectations laid out in the NCAF with assurance provided through the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT).

## Appendix B - Standards Development Work Plan and Milestones



## Appendix C – CPO Structure & Expenditure Evaluation

### 8. Elements of expenditure

When developing a capability through the portfolio approach there are four elements that should be considered separately when understanding the overall cost. These are:

**Production** – Programmes and projects are temporary structures established to develop products which contribute to the organisations change management work. The collection of change programmes and projects for any organisation or group is commonly referred to as a “change portfolio”. The resources required for these programmes and projects will be employed for the entire duration of the programme or project and may also use other resources on a temporary basis. The staff costs included in the production of projects and programmes within the CPO do not include support elements such as HR, ICT and general administrative duties. In general, the cost of running a project within the CPO is anticipated to be between £50k and £150k according to complexity. It is likely that, once established, the three NFCC programmes will run up to six projects per year, each. This equates to an expected maximum annual expenditure of circa £1.8m on projects.

**Governance and support** – the change portfolio is generally managed by a portfolio management office, for the fire and rescue services this is the CPO. It will be responsible for setting and assuring a standard approach to programme and project quality, reporting progress of the whole portfolio to governance boards, providing broader support functions such as digital platforms.

**Business change and benefits realisation** – To ensure services are ready to start using any products it is important to engage them, from an early stage, in the design of the end products. Once projects have delivered their products they will tend to close down and the resources utilised on other projects or areas of work. Therefore, on-going support of adoption and measurement of benefits across all projects is better managed across the whole portfolio.

**Maintenance of products** – Once a product, such as guidance, tools or standards, are produced it becomes a part of business as usual. As the fire and rescue services are not a single entity, it is appropriate for a central function to provide the maintenance function. This function will also need administration and support on an ongoing basis.

**Research and Development** – UKR&D has been established by the NFCC to deliver the research and development requirements of projects run through the CPO in achievement of the NFCC strategy. This will be expanded to include research requirements of any standard development.

The following sections provide a more detailed explanation of how the preferred option for standards production will provide a more efficient funding model for both the Home Office and Fire Authorities.



## **8.1. CPO Methodology for Programme Management**

The CPO has been tasked with delivering three programmes of work to meet three of the NFCC's strategic commitments; Community Risk Assessment, Digital and Workforce Reform. If these were run as independent programmes each would require an administrative and governance support arrangement. Each would also need to develop stakeholder relationships and business change support. As each programme would require several project managers with a workload that would peak and trough, there is an efficiency in being able to use these resources across multiple projects as they start and end. The estimated salary cost of running a standalone programme, with associated support is circa £705k with an FTE of 12 posts.

By establishing these three programmes under the umbrella of a portfolio management office (the CPO) much of the governance support can be shared across them. The inevitable peak and trough demand on project management resources can be levelled across the three programmes. This has allowed a model to be proposed and agreed by the NFCC at a salary cost of £1.58m with an FTE of 26 posts.

Within the CPO there is also a team of staff dedicated to taking learning from across the sector and ensuring the guidance produced by the National Operational Guidance Programme remains current, this small team consists of an FTE of 5 posts which costs £285k. While this cost is currently considered a cost specifically for the NFCC as it is focused purely on NFCC products maintenance, this scope of responsibility for this team will expand as more products including standards are completed and require ongoing monitor and maintenance.

## **8.2. Stand-Alone Standards Production Scenario**

The production of standards outside of the NFCC / CPO arrangements could be considered to be the equivalent of a programme of work which would then require all the same roles as those included in running a programme as detailed above. It would require strategic level leadership overall such as a chief executive or equivalent role. However, as the preferred option is the sector-led option, the equivalent of the chief executive role is already in place for the CPO and is provided for gratis by London Fire Brigade as part of the sector contribution.

In addition to the overall strategic management of the programme, each programme and project would require programme executives and other strategic but part time roles. For the current NFCC programmes and projects, these roles are performed by national lead officers generally at Chief Fire Officer level with no salary cost passed on. Again, a further sector contribution made by all services to programme delivery.

It is proposed, work on standards development be incorporated within NFCC programmes and projects delivery and therefore the relevant strategic leadership (programme and project executives) and subject matter expertise would be drawn from the sector at no cost.

Without access to this network and governance, the FSB would potentially need to employ non-executive directors who would require payment for their time spent on programme and project management work. This externally sourced model to deliver standards would result in an FTE of 14.5 with at least two non-executive directors. The salaries cost would therefore be circa £950k with a further £100k for the non-executive directors.

### 8.3. CPO standards delivery model

As the work load of the CPO and standards function are closely aligned there is significant duplication of posts within the two structures. By bringing the two together efficiencies can be realised for both. A combined staffing structure has been developed which has an FTE of 32, with a salaries budget of circa £1.95m.

Option	Total FTE	Total Salaries budget
Standalone programmes	36	£2.15m
Standalone CPO	26	£1.6m
Standalone Standards	14.5	£0.95m
CPO with Standards	32	£1.95

NB: The costs identified in this Appendix are salaries of permanent staff. Additional costs will be incurred for ICT, digital platform, project assurance, project temporary resources.